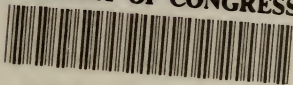
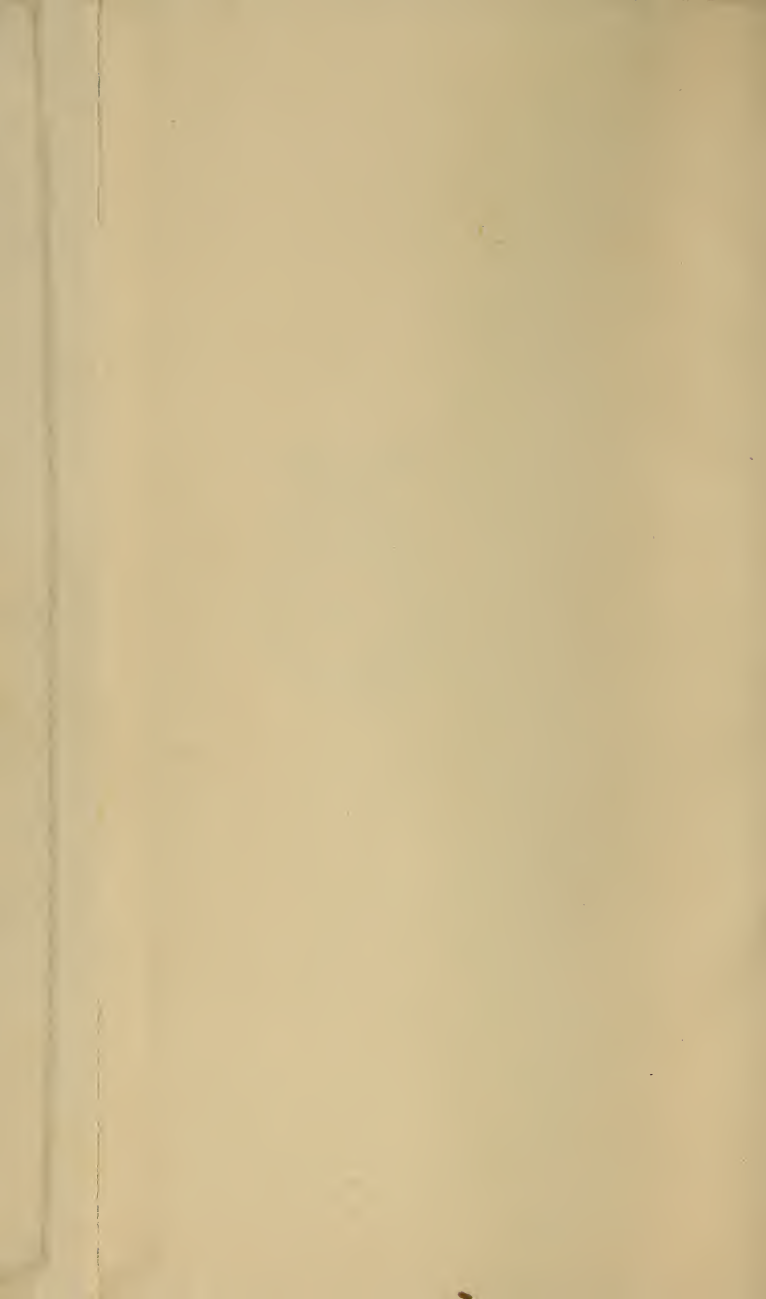


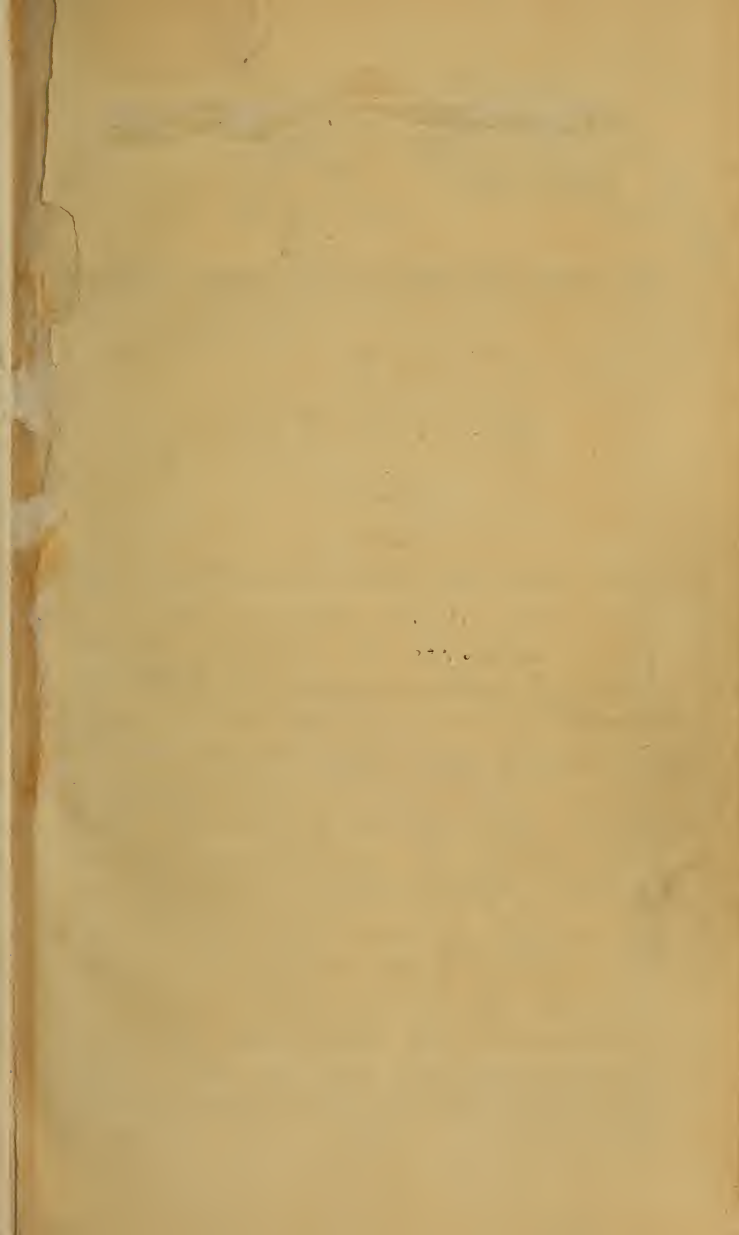
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An essay on the origin and progress
of novel-writing and prose fiction, biographi-
cal and critical from its first
commence.

John Barbanid

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ON

THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS

OF

NOVEL-WRITING.

A COLLECTION of Novels has a better chance of giving pleasure than of commanding respect. Books of this description are condemned by the grave, and despised by the fastidious; but their leaves are seldom found unopened, and they occupy the parlour and the dressing-room while productions of higher name are often gathering dust upon the shelf. It might not perhaps be difficult to show that this species of composition is entitled to a higher rank than has been generally assigned it. Fictitious adventures, in one form or other, have made a part of the polite literature of every age and nation. These have been grafted upon the actions of their heroes; they have been interwoven with their mythology; they have been moulded upon

the manners of the age,—and, in return, have influenced the manners of the succeeding generation by the sentiments they have infused and the sensibilities they have excited.

Adorned with the embellishments of Poetry, they produce the epic; more concentrated in the story, and exchanging narrative for action, they become dramatic. When allied with some great moral end, as in the *Telemaque* of Fenelon, and Marmontel's *Belisaire*, they may be termed didactic. They are often made the vehicles of satire, as in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, and the *Candide* and *Babouc* of Voltaire. They take a tincture from the learning and politics of the times, and are made use of successfully to attack or recommend the prevailing systems of the day. When the range of this kind of writing is so extensive, and its effect so great, it seems evident that it ought to hold a respectable place among the productions of genius; nor is it easy to say, why the poet, who deals in one kind of fiction, should have so high a place allotted him in the temple of fame; and the romance-writer so low a one as in the general estimation he is confined to. To measure the dignity of a writer by the pleasure he affords his readers is not perhaps using an accurate criterion; but the invention of a story, the choice of proper incidents,

the ordonnance of the plan, occasional beauties of description, and above all, the power exercised over the reader's heart by filling it with the successive emotions of love, pity, joy, anguish, transport, or indignation, together with the grave impressive moral resulting from the whole, imply talents of the highest order, and ought to be appretiated accordingly. A good novel is an epic in prose, with more of character and less (indeed in modern novels nothing) of the supernatural machinery.

If we look for the origin of fictitious tales and adventures, we shall be obliged to go to the earliest accounts of the literature of every age and country. The Eastern nations have always been fond of this species of mental gratification. The East is emphatically the country of invention. The Persians, Arabians, and other nations in that vicinity have been, and still are, in the habit of employing people whose business it is to compose and to relate entertaining stories; and it is surprising how many stories (as Parnell's Hermit for instance) which have passed current in verse and prose through a variety of forms, may be traced up to this source. From Persia the taste passed into the soft and luxurious Ionia. The *Milesian Tales*, written by Aristides of Miletus, at what time is not exactly known,

seem to have been a kind of novels. They were translated into Latin during the civil wars of Marius and Sylla. They consisted of loose love stories, but were very popular among the Romans; and the Parthian general who beat Crassus took occasion, from his finding a copy of them amongst the camp equipage, to reproach that nation with effeminacy, in not being able, even in time of danger, to dispense with such an amusement. From Ionia the taste of romances passed over to the Greeks about the time of Alexander the Great. The *Golden Ass* of Lucian, which is exactly in the manner of the Arabian Tales, is one of the few extant.

In the time of the Greek emperors these compositions were numerous, and had attained a form and a polish which assimilates them to the most regular and sentimental of modern productions. The most perfect of those which are come down to our time is *Theagenes and Chariclea*, a romance or novel, written by Heliodorus bishop of Tricca in Thessaly, who flourished under Arcadius and Honorius. Though his production was perfectly chaste and virtuous, he was called to account for it by a provincial synod, and ordered to burn his book or resign his bishopric; upon which, with the heroism of an author, he chose the

latter. Of this work a new translation was given in 1789; and had this Selection admitted translations, it would have found a place here. It is not so much read as it ought to be; and it may not be amiss to inform the customers to circulating libraries, that they may have the pleasure of reading a genuine novel, and at the same time enjoy the satisfaction of knowing how people wrote in Greek about love, above a thousand years ago. The scene of this work is chiefly laid in Egypt. It opens in a striking and picturesque manner. A band of pirates, from a hill that overlooks the Heracleotic mouth of the Nile, see a ship lying at anchor, deserted by its crew; a feast spread on the shore; a number of dead bodies scattered round, indicating a recent skirmish or quarrel at an entertainment: the only living creatures, a most beautiful virgin seated on a rock, weeping over and supporting a young man of an equally distinguished figure, who is wounded and apparently lifeless. These are the hero and the heroine of the piece, and being thus let into the middle of the story, the preceding events are given in narration. The description of the manner of life of the pirates at the mouth of the Nile is curious, and no doubt historical. It shows that, as well then as in Homer's time, piracy was looked upon as a

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mode of honourable war, and that a captain who treated the women with respect, and took a regular ransom for his captives, and behaved well to his men, did not scruple to rank himself with other military heroes. Indeed it might be difficult to say why he should not. It is a circumstance worth observing, that Tasso has in all probability borrowed a striking circumstance from the Greek romance. *Chariclea* is the daughter of a queen of Æthiopia, exposed by her mother to save her reputation, as, in consequence of the queen, while pregnant, having gazed at a picture of Perseus and Andromeda, her infant was born with a fair complexion. This is the counterpart of the story of Clorinda, in the *Gierusalemme Liberata*, whose mother is surprised with the same phænomenon, occasioned by having had in her chamber a picture of St. George. The discovery is kept back to the end of the piece, and is managed in a striking manner. There is much beautiful description, of which the pomp of heathen sacrifices and processions makes a great part; and the love is at once passionate and chaste.

The pastoral romance of Longus is also extant in the Greek language. It is esteemed elegant, but it would be impossible to chastise it into decency. The Latins, who had less

invention, had no writings of this kind, except the *Golden Ass* of Apuleius may be reckoned such. In it is found the beautiful episode of Cupid and Psyche, which has been elegantly modernized by Fontenelle. But romance writing was destined to revive with greater splendour under the Gothic powers, and it sprung out of the histories of the times, enlarged and exaggerated into fable. Indeed all fictions have probably grown out of real adventures. The actions of heroes would be the most natural subject for recital in a warlike age; a little flattery and a little love of the marvellous would overstep the modesty of truth in the narration. A champion of extraordinary size would be easily magnified into a giant. Tales of magic and enchantment probably took their rise from the awe and wonder with which the vulgar looked upon any instance of superior skill in mechanics or medicine, or acquaintance with any of the hidden properties of nature. The Arabian tales, so well known and so delightful, bear testimony to this. At a fair in Tartary a *magician* appears, who brings various curiosities, the idea of which was probably suggested by inventions they had heard of, which to people totally ignorant of the mechanical powers would appear the effect of enchantment.

How easily might the exhibition at Merlin's, or the tricks of Jonas, be made to pass for magic in New Holland or Otaheite ! Letters and figures were easily turned into talismans by illiterate men, who saw that a great deal was effected by them, and intelligence conveyed from place to place in a manner they could not account for. Medicine has always, in rude ages and countries, been accompanied with charms and superstitious practices, and the charming of serpents in the East is still performed in a way which the Europeans cannot discover. The total separation of scholastic characters from men of the world favoured the belief of magic ; and when to these causes are added the religious superstitions of the times, we shall be able to account for much of the marvellous in the first instance. These stories, as well as the historical ones, would be continually embellished, as they passed from hand to hand, till the small mixture of truth in them was scarcely discoverable.

The first Gothic romances appeared under the venerable guise of history. Arthur and the knights of the round table, Charlemagne and his peers, were their favourite heroes. The extended empire of Charlemagne and his conquests naturally offered themselves as subjects for recital ; but it seems extraordinary that Arthur, a British prince,

the scene of whose exploits was in Wales, a country little known to the rest of Europe, and who was continually struggling against ill-fortune, should have been so great a favourite upon the continent. Perhaps, however, the comparative obscurity of his situation might favour the genius of the composition, and the intercourse between Wales and Brittany would contribute to diffuse and exaggerate the stories of his exploits. In fact, every song and record relating to this hero was kept with the greatest care in Brittany, and, together with a chronicle deducing Prince Arthur from Priam king of Troy, was brought to England about the year 1100, by Walter Mapes archdeacon of Oxford, when he returned from the continent through that province. This medley of historical songs, traditions, and invention, was put into Latin by Geoffry of Monmouth, with many additions of his own, and from Latin translated into French in the year 1115, under the title of *Brut d'Angleterre*. It is full of the grossest anachronisms. *Merlin*, the enchanter, is a principal character in it. He opposes his Christian magic to the Arabian sorcerers. About the same time appeared a similar history of *Charlemagne*. Two expeditions of his were particularly celebrated ; his conversion of the Saxons by force of arms, and his expe-

dition into Spain against the Saracens ; in returning from which he met with the defeat of Roncevaux, in which was slain the celebrated *Roland*. This was written in Latin by a monk, who published it under the name of Archbishop Turpin, a cotemporary of Charlemagne, in order to give it credit. These two works were translated into most of the languages of Europe, and became the groundwork of numberless others, each more wonderful than the former, and each containing a sufficient number of giants, castles and dragons, beautiful damsels and valiant princes, with a great deal of religious zeal, and very little morality. *Amadis de Gaul* was one of the most famous of this class. Its origin is disputed between France and Spain. There is a great deal of fighting in it, much of the marvellous, and very little of sentiment. It has been given lately to the public in an elegant English dress by Mr. Southey ; but notwithstanding he has considerably abridged its tediousness, a sufficiency of that ingredient remains to make it rather a task to go through a work which was once so great a favourite. *Palmerin of England*, *Don Belianis of Greece*, and the others which make up the catalogue of Don Quixote's library, are of this stamp.

Richard Cœur de Lion and his exploits were

greatly to the taste of the early romance writers. The Crusades kindled a taste for romantic adventure ; the establishment of the Saracens in Spain had occasioned a large importation of genii and enchantments, and Moorish magnificence was grafted upon the tales of the Gothic chivalry. Of these heroic romances, the Troubadours were in France the chief composers : they began to flourish about the end of the tenth century. They by degrees mingled a taste for gallantry and romantic love with the adventures of heroes, and they gave to that passion an importance and a refinement which it had never possessed among the ancients. It was a compound of devotion, metaphysics, Platonism, and chivalry, making altogether such a mixture as the world had never seen before. There is something extremely mysterious in the manner in which ladies of rank allowed themselves to be addressed by these poetical lovers ; sometimes no doubt a real passion was produced, and some instances there are of its having had tragical consequences : but in general it may be suspected that the addresses of the Troubadours and other poets were rather a tribute paid to rank than to beauty ; and that it was customary for young men of parts, who had their fortune to make, to attach themselves to a patroness, of whom they made a kind

of idol, sometimes in the hopes of rising by her means, sometimes merely as a subject for their wit. The manner in which Queen Elizabeth allowed herself to be addressed by her courtiers, the dedications which were in fashion in Dryden's time, the letters of Voiture, and the general strain of poetry of Waller and Cowley, may serve to prove that there may be a great deal of gallantry without any passion. It is evident that, while these romance writers worshipped their mistress as a distant star, they did not disdain to warm themselves by meaner and nearer fires; for the species of love or rather adoration they professed did not at all prevent them from forming connexions with more accessible fair ones. Of all the countries on the continent, France and Spain had the greatest number of these chivalrous romances. In Italy the genius of the nation and the facility of versification led them to make poetry the vehicle of this kind of entertainment. The Cantos of Boiardo and Ariosto are romances in verse.

In the mean time Europe settled into a state of comparative tranquillity: castles and knights and adventures of distressed damsels ceased to be the topics of the day, and romances founded upon them had begun to be insipid when the immortal satire of Cervantes drove them off the

field, and they have never since been able to rally their forces. The first work of entertainment of a different kind which was published in France (for the *Pantagruel* of Rabelais is rather a piece of licentious satire than a romance) was the *Astrea* of M. d'Urfé. It is a pastoral romance, and became so exceedingly popular, that the belles and beaux of that country assumed the airs and language of shepherds and shepherdesses. A Celadon (the hero of the piece) became a familiar appellation for a languishing lover, and men of gallantry were seen with a crook in their hands, leading a tame lamb about the streets of Paris. The celebrity of this work was in great measure owing to its being strongly seasoned with allusions to the intrigues of the court of Henry the Fourth, in whose reign it was written. The volumes of *Astrea* are never opened in the present day but as a curiosity; to read them through would be a heavy task indeed. There is in the machinery a strange mixture of wood nymphs and druids. The work is full of anachronisms, but the time is supposed to be in the reign of Pharamond or his successors. The tale begins with the lover, who is under the displeasure of his mistress, throwing himself into the water, where he narrowly escapes drowning

at the very outset of the piece. We find here the *fountain of love*, in which if a man looks, he sees, if he is beloved, the face of his mistress; but if not, he is presented with the countenance of his rival: long languishing speeches and little adventures of intrigue fill up the story. It is interspersed with little pieces of poetry, very tolerable for the time, but highly complimentary. One of them turns upon the incident of the poet's mistress having burnt her cheek with her curling-iron; on which he takes occasion to say, "*that the fire of her eyes caused the mischief.*" This work was however found so interesting by M. Huet, the grave bishop of Avranches, that when he read it along with his sisters, he was often obliged (as he tells us) to lay the book down, that he and they might give free vent to their tears.

Though Cervantes had laid to rest the giants and enchanters, a new style of fictitious writing was introduced, not less remote from nature, in the romances *de longue haleine*, which originated in France, and of which Calprénede and Mad. Scudery were the most distinguished authors. The principle of these was high honour, impregnable chastity, a constancy unshaken by time or accident, and a species of love so exalted and refined,

that it bore little resemblance to a natural passion. These, in the construction of the story, came nearer to real life than the former had done. The adventures were marvellous, but not impossible. The heroes and heroines were taken from ancient history, but without any resemblance to the personages whose names they bore. The manners therefore and passions referred to an ideal world, the creation of the writer; but the situations were often striking, and the sentiments always noble. It is a curious circumstance that Rousseau, who tells us that his childhood was conversant in these romances, (a course of reading which no doubt fed and inflamed his fine imagination) has borrowed from them an affecting incident in his *Nouvelle Heloise*. *St. Preux*, when his mistress lies ill of the small-pox, glides into the room, approaches the bed in order to imbibe the danger, and retires without speaking. *Julie*, when recovered, is impressed with a confused idea of having seen him, but whether in a dream, a vision, or a reality, she cannot determine. This striking circumstance is taken from the now almost forgotten *Cassandra* of Scudery. The complimentary language of these productions seems to have influenced the intercourse of common life, at

least in the provinces, for Boileau introduces in his satires—

“ *Deux nobles campagnards, grands lecteurs de romans,
Qui m'ont dit tout Cyrus dans leurs longs complimens.*”

The same author made a more direct attack upon these productions in a dialogue entitled *Les Héros de Roman*, a humorous little piece, in which he ridiculed these as Cervantes had done the others, and drove them off the stage.

Heroic sentiment and refined feeling, as expressed in romances and plays, were at their height about this time in France; and while the story and adventures were taken from the really chivalrous ages, it is amusing to observe how the rough manners of those times are softened and polished to meet the ideas of a more refined age. A curious instance of this occurs in Corneille's well-known play of the *Cid*. *Chimene*, having lost her father by the hand of her lover, not only breaks off the connexion, but throws herself at the feet of the king to entreat him to avenge her by putting *Rodrigues* to death: “ *Sire, vengeance!*” But in the genuine chronicle of the *Cid*, with which curious and entertaining work Mr. Southey has lately obliged the public, the previous incidents of the combat are nearly the same, and *Ximena* in like manner throws

herself at the feet of the king; but to beg what?—not vengeance upon the murderer of her father, but that the king would be pleased to give her *Rodrigues* for a husband, to whom moreover she is not supposed to have had any previous attachment; her request seems to proceed from the simple idea that *Rodrigues*, by killing her father, having deprived her of one protector, it was but reasonable that he should give her another.

Rude times are fruitful of striking adventures; polished times must render them pleasing.—The ponderous volumes of the romance writers being laid upon the shelf, a closer imitation of nature began to be called for; not but that, from the earliest times, there had been stories taken from, or imitating, real life. The *Decameron* of Boccacio (a storehouse of tales, and a standard of the language in which it is written), the *Cent Nouvelles* of the Queen of Navarre, *Contes et Fabliaux* without number, may be considered as novels of a lighter texture: they abounded with adventure, generally of the humorous, often of the licentious kind, and indeed were mostly founded on intrigue, but the nobler passions were seldom touched. The *Roman Comique* of Scarron is a regular piece of its kind. Its subject is the adventures of a set

of strolling players. Comic humour it certainly possesses, but the humour is very coarse and the incidents mostly low. Smollet seems to have formed himself very much upon this model.— But the *Zaïde* and the *Princesse de Cleves* of Madame de la Fayette are esteemed to be the first which approach the modern novel of the serious kind, the latter especially. Voltaire says of them, that they were “*les premiers romans où l’on vit les mœurs des honnêtes gens, et des aventures naturelles décrites avec grace. Avant elle on écrivoit d’un stile empoulé des choses peu vraisemblables.*” “They were the first novels which gave the manners of cultivated life and natural incidents related with elegance. Before the time of this lady, the style of these productions was affectedly turgid, and the adventures out of nature.” The modesty of Mad. de la Fayette led her to shelter her productions, on their first publication, under the name of Segrais, her friend, under whose revision they had passed. Le Sage in his *Gil Blas*, a work of infinite entertainment though of dubious morality, has given us pictures of more familiar life, abounding in character and incident. The scene is laid in Spain, in which country he had travelled, and great part of it is imitated from the adventures of *Don Gusman d’Alvarache*; for Spain,

though her energies have so long lain torpid, was earlier visited by polite literature than any country of Europe, Italy excepted. Her authors abounded in invention, so that the plots of plays and groundwork of novels were very frequently drawn from their productions. Cervantes himself, besides his *Don Quixote*, which has been translated and imitated in every country, wrote several little tales and novels, some of which he introduced into that work, for he only banished one species of fiction to introduce another. The French improved upon their masters. There is not perhaps a more amusing book than *Gil Blas*; it abounds in traits of exquisite humour and lessons of life, which, though not always pure, are many of them useful. In this work of Le Sage, like some of Smollet's, the hero of the piece excites little interest, and it rather exhibits a series of separate adventures, slightly linked together, than a chain of events concurring in one plan to the production of the catastrophe, like the *Tom Jones* of Fielding. The scenes of his *Diable Boiteux* are still more slightly linked together. That, and his *Bachelier de Salamunque*, are of the same stamp with *Gil Blas*, though inferior to it.

Marivaux excelled in a different style. His *Marianne* and *Paisan Parvenu* give a picture

of French manners with all their refinement and delicacy of sentiment. He lays open the heart, particularly the female heart, in its inmost folds and recesses ; its little vanities and affectations as well as its finer feelings. He abounds in wit, but it is of a refined kind, and requires thought in the reader to enter into it. He has also much humour, and describes comic scenes and characters amongst the lower and middle ranks with a great deal of the comic effect, but without the coarseness, of Fielding. He eluded the difficulty of winding up a story by leaving both his pieces unfinished. Marivaux was contemporary with our Richardson : his style is found fault with by some French critics. From his time, novels of all kinds have made a large and attractive portion of French literature.

At the head of writers of this class stands the seductive, the passionate Rousseau,—the most eloquent writer in the most eloquent modern language : whether his glowing pencil paints the strong emotions of passion, or the enchanting scenery of nature in his own romantic country, or his peculiar cast of moral sentiment,—a charm is spread over every part of the work, which scarcely leaves the judgement free to condemn what in it is dangerous or reprehensible. His are truly the “ Thoughts that

breathe and words that burn." He has hardly any thing of story ; he has but few figures upon his canvass ; he wants them not ; his characters are drawn more from a creative imagination than from real life, and we wonder that what has so little to do with nature should have so much to do with the heart. Our censure of the tendency of this work will be softened, if we reflect that Rousseau's aim, as far as he had a moral aim, seems to have been to give a striking example of fidelity in the *married* state, which, it is well known, is little thought of by the French ; though they would judge with the greatest severity the more pardonable failure of an unmarried woman. But Rousseau has not reflected that *Julie* ought to have considered herself as indissolubly united to *St. Preux* ; her marriage with another was the infidelity. Rousseau's great rival in fame, Voltaire, has written many light pieces of fiction which can scarcely be called novels. They abound in wit and shrewdness, but they are all composed to subserve his particular views, and to attack systems which he assailed in every kind of way. His *Candide* has much strong painting of the miseries and vices which abound in this world, and is levelled against the only system which can console the mind under the view of them. In *L'Ingénu*,

beside the wit, he has shown that he could also be pathetic. *Les Lettres Peruviennes*, by Mad. Grafigny, is a most ingenious and charming little piece. *Paul et Virginie*, by that friend of humanity St. Pierre, with the purest sentiment and most beautiful description, is pathetic to a degree that even distresses the feelings. *La Chaumiere Indienne*, also his, breathes the spirit of universal philanthropy. *Caroline de Lichtfeld* is justly a favourite; but it were impossible to enumerate all the elegant compositions of this class which later times have poured forth. For the expression of sentiment in all its various shades, for the most delicate tact, and a refinement and polish, the fruit of high cultivation, the French writers are superior to those of every other nation.

There is one species of this composition which may be called the *Didactic Romance*, which they have particularly made use of as a vehicle for moral sentiment, and philosophical or political systems and opinions.—Of this nature is the beautiful fiction of *Télémaque*, if it be not rather an Epic in prose; the high merit of which cannot be sufficiently appreciated, unless the reader bears in mind when and to whom it was written; that it dared to attack the fondness for war and the disposition to

ostentatious profusion, under a monarch the most vain and ambitious of his age, and to draw, expressly as a pattern for his successor, the picture of a prince, the reverse of him in almost every thing. *Les Voyages de Cyrus*, by Ramsay, and *Sethos*, by the Abbé Terrasson, are of the same kind; the former is rather dry and somewhat mystical: it enters pretty deeply into the mythology of the ancients, and aims at showing that the leading truths of religion,—an original state of happiness, a fall from that state, and the final recovery and happiness of all sentient beings,—are to be found in the mythological systems of all nations. Ramsay was a Scotchman by birth, but had lived long enough in France to write the language like a native; a rare acquisition! The latter, *Sethos*, contains, interwoven in its story, all that we know concerning the customs and manners of the ancient Egyptians; the trial of the dead before they are received to the honours of sepulture, and the various ordeals of the initiation, are very striking. A high and severe tone of morals reigns through the whole, and indeed both this and the last mentioned are much too grave for the readers of romance in general. That is not the case with the *Belisaire*, and *Les Incas*, of Marmontel, in which the incidents meant to strike the feelings and

the fancy are executed with equal happiness with the preceptive part. Writings like these co-operated powerfully with the graver labours of the encyclopedists in diffusing sentiments of toleration, a spirit of free inquiry, and a desire for equal laws and good government over Europe. Happy, if the mighty impulse had permitted them to stop within the bounds of justice and moderation! The French language is well calculated for eloquence. The harmony and elegance of French prose, the taste of their writers, and the grace and amenity which they know how to diffuse over every subject, give great effect to compositions of this kind. When *we* aim at eloquence in prose, we are apt to become turgid. Florian, though a feebler writer, is not void of merit. His *Galatée* is from Cervantes; his *Gonsalve de Cordoue* is built upon the history of that hero.

There is one objection to be made to these romances founded on history, which is, that if the personages are not judiciously selected, they are apt to impress false ideas on the mind. *Sethos* is well chosen for a hero in this respect. His name scarcely emerges from the obscurity of half fabulous times, and of a country whose records are wrapped in mystery; for all that is recorded of *Sethos* is, merely that there was such

a prince, and that, for some reason or other, he entered into the priesthood. *Cyrus*, though so conspicuous a character, was probably thought a fair one for the purpose, as Xenophon has evidently made use of him in the same manner; but it may admit a doubt whether *Belisarius* is equally so; still less, many in more modern times that have been selected for writings of this kind. *Telemachus* is a character already within the precincts of poetry and fable, and may illustrate without any objection the graceful fictions of Fenelon. Our own Prince *Arthur* offers himself with equal advantage for poetry or romance. Where history says little, fiction may say much: events and men that are dimly seen through the obscurity of remote periods and countries, may be illuminated with these false lights; but where history throws her light steady and strong, no artificial colouring should be permitted. Impressions of historical characters very remote from the truth, often remain on the mind from dramatic compositions. If we examine into our ideas of the Henries and Richards of English history, we shall perhaps find that they are as much drawn from Shakespear as from Hume or Rapin. Some of our English romances are very faulty in this respect. A lady confessed that she could never get over a prejudice against the

character of our Elizabeth, arising from her cruelty to two imaginary daughters of Mary Queen of Scots, who never existed but in the pages of a novel. The more art is shown, and much is often shown, in weaving the fictitious circumstances into the texture of the history, the worse is the tendency. A romance of which *Edward the Black Prince* is the hero, by Clara Reeves, has many curious particulars of the customs of that age; but the manners of his court are drawn with such a splendid colouring of heroic virtue, as certainly neither that court nor any other ever deserved.

Among the authors of preceptive novels, Mad. Genlis stands very high. Her *Adele et Théodore* is a system of education, the whole of which is given in action; there is infinite ingenuity in the various illustrative incidents: the whole has an air of the world and of good company; to an English reader it is also interesting as exhibiting traits of Parisian manners, and modern manners, from one who was admitted into the first societies. A number of characters are delineated and sustained with truth and spirit, and the stories of *Cecile* and the *Duchesse de C.* are uncommonly interesting and well told, while the sublime benevolence of M. and Mad. Lagaraye presents a cure for sorrow worthy of a

Howard. From the system of Mad. Genlis many useful hints may be gathered, though the English reader will probably find much that differs from his own ideas. A good bishop, as Huet relates, conceiving of love as a most formidable enemy to virtue, entertained the singular project of writing, or procuring to be written, a number of novels framed in such a manner as to inspire an antipathy to this profane passion. Madame Genlis seems to have had the same idea; and in this manual of education, love is represented as a passion totally unfit to enter the breast of a young female; and in this, and in all her other works, she invariably represents as ending in misery, every connexion which is begun by a mutual inclination. The parent, the mother rather, must dispose of her daughter; the daughter must be passive; and the great happiness of her life, is to be the having in her turn a daughter, in whose affections *she* is to be the prime object. Filial affection is no doubt much exaggerated by this writer. It is not natural that a young woman should make it an indispensable condition of marrying an amiable young man, that he will not separate her from her mother. We know in England what filial affection is, and we know it does not rise so high, and we know too that it ought not. There is another

objection to Mad. Genlis' system of education, which applies also to Rousseau's *Emile*, which is, that it is too much founded upon deception. The pupil never sees the real appearance of life and manners: the whole of his education is a series of contrived artificial scenery, produced, as occasion demands, to serve a particular purpose. Few of these scenes would succeed at all; a number of them certainly never would. Indeed Mad. Genlis is not very strict in the point of veracity. A little fibbing is even enjoined to Adele occasionally on particular emergencies. *Les Veillées du Chateau*, by the same author, has great merit. A number of other productions which have flowed from her pen witness her fertility of invention and astonishing rapidity of execution: their merit is various; all have great elegance of style: but it is observable, that in some of her later novels, she has endeavoured to favour the old order of things, to make almost an object of worship of Louis the Fourteenth, and to revive the reverence for monastic seclusion, which, with so much pathos, she had attacked in her charming story of *Cecile*. The *Attala* of M. Chateau Briand is in like manner directed to prop the falling fabric of Romish faith.

The celebrated daughter of Necker is one whose name cannot be passed over in this connexion.

Her *Delphine* exhibits great powers: some of the situations are very striking; and the passion of love is expressed in such a variety of turns and changes, and with so many refined delicacies of sentiment, that it is surprising how any language could, and surely no language could but the French, find a sufficient variety of phrases in which to dress her ideas.—Yet this novel cannot be called a pleasing one. One monotonous colour of sadness prevails through the whole, varied indeed with deeper or lighter shades, but no where presenting the cheerful hues of contentment and pleasure. A heavier accusation lies against this work from its tendency, on which account it has been said that the author was desired by the present sovereign of France to leave Paris; but we may well suspect that a scrupulous regard to morality had less share than political motives in such a prohibition. *Corinne*, by the same author, is less exceptionable, and has less force. It has some charming descriptions, and a picture of English country manners which may interest our curiosity, though it will not greatly flatter our vanity. Elegant literature has sustained a loss in the recent death of Mad. Cotin. Her *Elizabeth* and *Matilde* have given her a deserved celebrity.

The latter is however very enthusiastic and gloomy.

A number of other French writers of this class might have been mentioned, as Mad. Riccoboni, Mad. Elie de Beaumont, the Abbé Prévost, whose *Chevalier de Grioux* though otherwise not commendable, has some very pathetic parts. To these may be added Crebillon, and a number of writers of his class; for it must not be disguised, that besides the more respectable French novels, there are a number of others, which having passed no license of press, were said to be sold *sous le manteau*, and were not therefore the less read. These are not merely exceptionable, they are totally unfit to enter a house where the morals of young people are esteemed an object. They are generally not coarse in language, less so perhaps than many English ones which aim at humour; but gross sensual pleasure is the very soul of them. The awful frown with which the better part of the English public seem disposed to receive any approaches, either in verse or prose, to the French voluptuousness, does honour to the national character.

The Germans, formerly remarkable for the laborious heaviness and patient research of their literary labours, have, within this last century, culti-

vated with great success the field of polite literature. Plays, tales, and novels of all kinds, many of them by their most celebrated authors, were at first received with avidity in this country, and even made the study of their language popular. The tide has turned, and they are now as much deprettiated. The *Sorrows of Werter*, by Goethe, was the first of these with which we were familiarized in this country : we received it through the medium of a French translation. It is highly pathetic, but its tendency has been severely, perhaps justly, censured ; yet the author might plead that he has given warning of the probable consequences of illicit and uncontrolled passions by the awful catastrophe. It is certain, however, that the impression made is of more importance than the moral deduced ; and if Schiller's fine play of *The Robbers* has had, as we are assured it has, the effect of leading some well-educated young gentlemen to commit depredations on the public, allured by the splendour of the principal character, we may well suppose that Werter's delirium of passion will not be less seducing. Goethe has written another novel, much esteemed, it is said, by the Germans, which contains, amongst other things, criticisms on the drama. The celebrated Wieland has composed a great number of works of

fiction ; the scene of most of them is laid in ancient Greece. His powers are great, his invention fertile, but his designs insidious. He and some others of the German writers of philosophical romances have used them as a frame to attack received opinions, both in religion and in morals. Two at least of his performances have been translated, *Agathon* and *Peregrine Proteus*. The former is beautifully written, but its tendency is seductive. The latter has taken for its basis a historical character ; its tendency is also obvious. Klinger is an author who deals in the horrid. He subsists on murders and atrocities of all sorts, and introduces devils and evil spirits among his personages ; he is said to have powers, but to labour under a total want of taste. In contrast to this writer and those of his class, may be mentioned *The Ghost Seer*, by Schiller, and *The Sorcerer* by another hand. These were written to expose the artifices of the Italian adepts of the school of Cagliostro. It is well known that these were spreading superstition and enthusiasm on the German part of the continent to an alarming degree, and had so worked upon the mind of the late king of Prussia, that he was made to believe he possessed the power of rendering himself invisible, and was wonderfully pleased when one of his courtiers (who, by

the way, understood his trade) ran against and jostled him, pretending not to see his Majesty. These have been translated; as also a pleasant and lively satire on Lavater's system of physiognomy, written by Museus, author of *Popular Tales of the Germans*. The Germans abound in materials for works of the imagination; for they are rich in tales and legends of an impressive kind, which have perhaps amused generation after generation as nursery stories, and lain like ore in the mine, ready for the hand of taste to separate the dross and polish the material: for it is infinitely easier, when a nation has gained cultivation, to polish and methodize than to invent. A very pleasing writer of novels, in the more common acceptation of the term, is Augustus la Fontaine; at least he has written some for which he merits that character, though perhaps more that are but indifferent. His *Tableaux de Famille* contains many sweet domestic pictures and touches of nature. It is imitated from *The Vicar of Wakefield*.—The Germans are a very book-making people. It is calculated that twenty thousand authors of that nation live by the exercise of the pen; and in the article of novels it is computed that seven thousand, either original or translated, have been printed by them within the last five-and-twenty years.

One Chinese novel has been translated. It is called *The Pleasing History, or the Adventures of Hau Kiou Choan*. It is said to be much esteemed, but can only be interesting to an European, as exhibiting something of the manners of that remote and singular country. It chiefly turns upon the stratagems used by the heroine to elude the ardour of her lover, and retard his approaches, till every circumstance of form and ceremony had been complied with. In their most tender assignations the lady is hid behind a curtain, as he is not permitted to see her face; and a female attendant conveys the tender speeches from one to the other; by which, according to our ideas, they would lose much of their pathos. The chief quality the heroine exhibits is cunning, and the adventures are a kind of hide-and-seek between the lovers. In short, *Shuy Ping Sin* to a Chinese may possibly be as great an object of admiration as *Clarissa*, but her accomplishments are not calculated for the meridian of this country.

In England, most of the earlier romances, from the days of Chaucer to James the First, were translations from the Spanish or French. One of the most celebrated of our own growth is Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, dedicated to his sister the Countess of Pembroke. It is a kind

of pastoral romance, mingled with adventures of the heroic and chivalrous kind. It has great beauties, particularly in poetic imagery. It is a book which all have heard of, which some few possess, but which nobody reads. The taste of the times seems to have been for ponderous performances. The Duchess of Newcastle was an indefatigable writer in this way. Roger Boyle, earl of Orrery, published, in 1664, a romance called *Parthenissa*. It was in three volumes folio, and unfinished, to which circumstance alone his biographer, Mr. Walpole, attributes its being but little read. He must have had a capacious idea of the appetite of the readers of those days. There is a romance of later date, in one small volume, by the Hon. Robert Boyle—*The Martyrdom of Didymus and Thecdora*, a Christian heroic tale. We had pretty early some celebrated political romances. Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, Barclay's *Argenis*, and Harrington's *Oceana*, are of this kind: the two former are written in Latin. The *Utopia*, which is meant as a model of a perfect form of civil polity, is chiefly preserved in remembrance at present by having had the same singular fortune with the *Quixote* of Cervantes, of furnishing a new word, which has been adopted into the language as a permanent part of it; for we speak familiarly of an Utopian

scheme and a Quixotish expedition. Barclay was a Scotchman by birth; he was introduced at the court of James the First, and was afterwards professor of civil law at Angers; he died at Rome. His *Argenis* is a political allegory, which displays the revolutions and vices of courts; it is not destitute of imagery and elevated sentiment, and displays much learning; and while the allusions it is full of were understood, it was much read, and was translated into various languages, but is at present sunk into oblivion, though a new translation was made not many years since by Mrs. Clara Reeves. Harrington's *Oceana* is meant as a model of a perfect republic, the constant idol of his imagination. All these, though works of fiction, would greatly disappoint those who should look into them for amusement. Of the lighter species of this kind of writing, *the Novel*, till within half a century we had scarcely any. *The Atalantis* of Mrs. Manley lives only in that line of Pope which seems to promise it immortality:

“As long as *Atalantis* shall be read.”

It was, like *Astrea*, filled with fashionable scandal. Mrs. Behn's Novels were licentious; they are also fallen; but it ought not to be forgotten that Southern borrowed from her his af-

fecting story of *Oroonoko*. Mrs. Haywood was a very prolific genius ; her earlier novels are in the style of Mrs. Behn's, and Pope has chastised her in his *Dunciad* without mercy or delicacy, but her later works are by no means void of merit. She wrote *The Invisible Spy*, and *Betsy Thoughtless*, and was the author of *The Female Spectator*.

But till the middle of the last century, theatrical productions and poetry made a far greater part of polite reading than novels, which had attained neither to elegance nor discrimination of character. Some adventures and a love story were all they aimed at. 'The ladies' library, described in the *Spectator*, contains " *The grand Cyrus*, with a pin stuck in one of the leaves," and " *Cleliâ*, which opened of itself in the place that describes two lovers in a bower:" but there does not occur either there, or, I believe, in any other part of the work, the name of one English novel, the *Atalantis* only excepted ; though plays are often mentioned as a favourite and dangerous part of ladies' reading, and certainly the plays of those times were worse than any novels of the present. The first author amongst us who distinguished himself by natural painting, was that truly original genius De Foe. His *Robinson Crusoe* is to this day an *unique* in its kind, and he has made it very

interesting without applying to the common resource of love. At length, in the reign of George the Second, Richardson, Fielding, and Smollet, appeared in quick succession; and their success raised such a demand for this kind of entertainment, that it has ever since been furnished from the press, rather as a regular and necessary supply, than as an occasional gratification. Novels have indeed been numerous “as leaves in Vallombrosa.” The indiscriminate passion for them, and their bad effects on the female mind, became the object of the satire of Garrick, in a sprightly piece entitled *Polly Honeycomb*. A few deserve to be mentioned, either for their excellence or the singularity of their plan.

The history of *Gaudentio di Lucca*, published in 1725, is the effusion of a fine fancy and a refined understanding; it is attributed to Bishop Berkeley. It gives an account of an imaginary people in the heart of Africa, their manners and customs. They are supposed to be descended from the ancient Egyptians, and to be concealed from all the world by impenetrable deserts. The description of crossing the sands is very striking, and shows much information as well as fancy. It is not written to favour any particular system; the whole is the play of a fine imagina-

tion delighting itself with images of perfection and happiness, which it cannot find in any existing form of things. The frame is very well managed ; the whole is supposed to be read in manuscript to the fathers of the Inquisition, and the remarks of the holy office are very much in character. A highly romantic air runs through the whole, but the language is far from elegant.

Another singular publication which appeared in 1756, was *The Memoirs of several Ladies*, by John Bunce, followed the next year by the *Life of Bunce*. These volumes are very whimsical, but contain entertainment. The ladies, whose memoirs he professes to give, are all highly beautiful and deeply learned ; good Hebrew scholars ; and, above all, zealous Unitarians. The author generally finds them in some sequestered dell, among the fells and mountains of Westmoreland, where, after a narrow escape of breaking his neck amongst rocks and precipices, he meets, like a true knight-errant, with one of these adventures. He marries in succession four or five of these prodigies, and the intervals between description and adventure are filled up with learned conversations on abstruse points of divinity. Many of the descriptions are taken from nature ; and, as the book was much read, have possibly contributed to spread that taste for

lake and mountain scenery which has since been so prevalent. The author was a clergyman.

A novel universally read at the time was *Chrysal*, or *The Adventures of a Guinea*. It described real characters and transactions, mostly in high life, under fictitious names; and certainly if a knowledge of the vicious part of the world be a desirable acquisition, *Chrysal* will amply supply it; but many of the scenes are too coarse not to offend a delicate mind, and the generation it describes is past away. *Pompey the Little*, with a similar frame, has less of personality, and is a lively pleasant satire. Its author is unknown.

About fifty years ago a very singular work appeared, somewhat in the guise of a novel, which gave a new impulse to writings of this stamp; namely, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*, followed by *The Sentimental Journey*, by the rev. Mr. Sterne, a clergyman of York. They exhibit much originality, wit, and beautiful strokes of pathos, but a total want of plan or adventure, being made up of conversations and detached incidents. It is the peculiar characteristic of this writer, that he affects the heart, not by long drawn tales of distress, but by light electric touches which thrill the nerves of the reader who possesses a correspondent sensibility of frame. His characters, in like manner, are struck out by a few

masterly touches. He resembles those painters who can give expression to a figure by two or three strokes of bold outline, leaving the imagination to fill up the sketch; the feelings are awakened as really by the story of *Le Fevre*, as by the narrative of *Clarissa*. The indelicacies of these volumes are very reprehensible, and indeed in a clergyman scandalous, particularly in the first publication, which however has the richest vein of humour. The two *Shandys*, *Trim*, *Dr. Slop*, are all drawn with a masterly hand. It is one of the merits of Sterne that he has awakened the attention of his readers to the wrongs of the poor negroes, and certainly a great spirit of tenderness and humanity breathes throughout the work. It is rather mortifying to reflect how little the power of expressing these feelings is connected with moral worth; for Sterne was a man by no means attentive to the happiness of those connected with him; and we are forced to confess that an author may conceive the idea of "brushing away flies without killing them," and yet behave ill in every relation of life.

It has lately been said that Sterne has been indebted for much of his wit to *Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy*. He certainly exhibits a good deal of reading in that and many other books out of the common way, but the wit is

in the application, and that is his own. This work gave rise to the vapid effusions of a crowd of sentimentalists, many of whom thought they had seized the spirit of Sterne, because they could copy him in his breaks and asterisks. The taste spread, and for a while, from the pulpit to the playhouse, the reign of sentiment was established. Among the more respectable imitators of Sterne may be reckoned Mr. Mackenzie in his *Man of Feeling* and his *Julia de Roubigné*, and Mr. Pratt in his *Emma Corbett*.

An interesting and singular novel, *The Fool of Quality*, was written by Henry Brooke, a man of genius, the author of *Gustavus Vasa* and many other productions. Many beautiful and pathetic episodal stories might be selected from it, but the story runs out into a strain romantic and improbable beyond the common allowed measure of this kind of writing; so that as a whole it cannot be greatly recommended: but it ought not to be forgotten that the very popular work of *Sandford and Merton* is taken from it. It has not merely given the hint for that publication; but the plan, the contrasted character of the two boys, and many particular incidents are so closely copied, that it will hardly be thought by one who peruses them both together, that

Mr. Day has made *quite* sufficient acknowledgment in his preface. Rousseau had about this time awakened the public attention to the preference of natural manners in children, in opposition to the artificial usages of fashionable life; and much of the spirit of *Emile* is seen in this part of the work. The present generation have been much obliged to Mr. Day for separating this portion of the novel from the mass of improbable adventure in which it is involved, clothing it in more elegant language, and giving those additions which have made it so deservedly a favourite in the juvenile library. The religious feelings are often awakened in *The Fool of Quality*, not indeed without a strong tincture of enthusiasm, to which the author was inclined. Indeed, his imagination had at times prevailed over his reason before he wrote it.

A number of novels might be mentioned, which are, or have been, popular, though not of high celebrity. Sarah Fielding, sister to the author of *Tom Jones*, composed several; among which *David Simple* is the most esteemed: she was a woman of good sense and cultivation; and if she did not equal her brother in talent, she did not, like him, lay herself open to moral censure. She translated Xeno-

phon's *Socrates*, and wrote a very pretty book for children, *The Governess, or Female Academy*.

Many tears have been shed by the young and tender-hearted over *Sidney Biddulph*, the production of Mrs. Sheridan, the wife of Mr. Thomas Sheridan the lecturer, an ingenious and amiable woman: the sentiments of this work are pure and virtuous, but the author seems to have taken pleasure in heaping distress upon virtue and innocence, merely to prove, what no one will deny, that the best dispositions are not always sufficient to ward off the evils of life. Why is it that women when they write are apt to give a melancholy tinge to their compositions? Is it that they suffer more, and have fewer resources against melancholy? Is it that men, mixing at large in society, have a brisker flow of ideas, and, seeing a greater variety of characters, introduce more of the business and pleasures of life into their productions? Is it that humour is a scarcer product of the mind than sentiment, and more congenial to the stronger powers of man? Is it that women nurse those feelings in secrecy and silence and diversify the expression of them with endless shades of sentiment, which are more transiently felt, and with fewer modifications of delicacy, by the other sex? The remark,

if true, has no doubt many exceptions ; but the productions of several ladies, both French and English, seem to countenance it.

Callistus, or The Man of Fashion, by Mr. Mulso, is a pathetic story ; but it is written entirely for moral effect, and affords little of entertainment. Mr. Graves, an author of a very different cast, is known in this walk by *Columella* and his *Spiritual Quixote*. The latter is a popular work, and possesses some humour ; but the humour is coarse, and the satire much too indiscriminately levelled against a society whose doctrines, operating with strong effect upon a large body of the most ignorant and vicious class, must necessarily include in their sweeping net much vice and folly, as well as much of sincere piety and corresponding morals. The design of his *Columella* is less exceptionable. It presents a man educated in polite learning and manners, who, from a fastidious rejection of the common active pursuits of life, rusticates in a country solitude, grows morose and peevish, and concludes with marrying his maid ; no unusual consequence of a whimsical and morose singularity ; the secret springs of which are, more commonly, a tincture of indolence and pride than superiority of genius. Mr. Graves was brought up originally for physic, but took orders and became

rector of Claverton near Bath. He was the author of several publications, both translations and original ; he was fond of writing, and published what he entitled his *Senilities* when at the age of near ninety. He died in 1804.—But it is time to retire from the enumeration of these works of fancy, or the reader might be as much startled with the number of heroes and heroines called up around him, as Ulysses was with the troops of shades that came flocking about him in the infernal regions.

If the end and object of this species of writing be asked, many no doubt will be ready to tell us that its object is,—to call in fancy to the aid of reason, to deceive the mind into embracing truth under the guise of fiction :

“ *Così a l'egro fanciul porgiamo aspersi
Di soave licor gli orli del vaso,
Succhi amari, ingannato in tanto ei beve,
E da l'inganno suo vita ricevere.*”

with such-like reasons equally grave and dignified. For my own part, I scruple not to confess that, when I take up a novel, my end and object is entertainment ; and as I suspect that to be the case with most readers, I hesitate not to say that entertainment is their legitimate end and object. To read the productions of wit and genius is a very high pleasure to all persons of taste, and the

avidity with which they are read by all such shows sufficiently that they are calculated to answer this end. Reading is the cheapest of pleasures : it is a domestic pleasure. Dramatic exhibitions give a more poignant delight, but they are seldom enjoyed in perfection, and never without expense and trouble. Poetry requires in the reader a certain elevation of mind and a practised ear. It is seldom relished unless a taste be formed for it pretty early. But the humble novel is always ready to enliven the gloom of solitude, to soothe the languor of debility and disease, to win the attention from pain or vexatious occurrences, to take man from himself, (at many seasons the worst company he can be in,) and, while the moving picture of life passes before him, to make him forget the subject of his own complaints. It is pleasant to the mind to sport in the boundless regions of possibility ; to find relief from the sameness of every-day occurrences by expatiating amidst brighter skies and fairer fields ; to exhibit love that is always happy, valour that is always successful ; to feed the appetite for wonder by a quick succession of marvellous events ; and to distribute, like a ruling providence, rewards and punishments which fall just where they ought to fall.

It is sufficient therefore as an end, that these writings add to the innocent pleasures of life; and if they do no harm, the entertainment they give is a sufficient good. We cut down the tree that bears no fruit, but we ask nothing of a flower beyond its scent and its colour. The unpardonable sin in a novel is dullness: however grave or wise it may be, if its author possesses no powers of amusing, he has no business to write novels; he should employ his pen in some more serious part of literature.

But it is not necessary to rest the credit of these works on amusement alone, since it is certain they have had a very strong effect in infusing principles and moral feelings. It is impossible to deny that the most glowing and impressive sentiments of virtue are to be found in many of these compositions, and have been deeply imbibed by their youthful readers. They awaken a sense of finer feelings than the commerce of ordinary life inspires. Many a young woman has caught from such works as *Clarissa* or *Cecilia*, ideas of delicacy and refinement which were not, perhaps, to be gained in any society she could have access to. Many a maxim of prudence is laid up in the memory from these stores, ready to operate when occasion offers.

The passion of love, the most seductive of all the passions, they certainly paint too high, and represent its influence beyond what it will be found to be in real life ; but if they soften the heart they also refine it. They mix with the natural passions of our nature all that is tender in virtuous affection ; all that is estimable in high principle and unshaken constancy ; all that grace, delicacy, and sentiment can bestow of touching and attractive. Benevolence and sensibility to distress are almost always insisted on in modern works of this kind ; and perhaps it is not too much to say, that much of the softness of our present manners, much of that tincture of humanity so conspicuous amidst all our vices, is owing to the bias given by our dramatic writings and fictitious stories. A high regard to female honour, generosity, and a spirit of self-sacrifice, are strongly inculcated. It costs nothing, it is true, to an author to make his hero generous, and very often he is extravagantly so ; still, sentiments of this kind serve in some measure to counteract the spirit of the world, where selfish considerations have always more than their due weight. In what discourse from the pulpit are religious feelings more strongly raised than in the prison sermon of *The Vicar*

of *Wakefield*, or some parts of *The Fool of Quality*?

But not only those splendid sentiments with which, when properly presented, our feelings readily take part, and kindle as we read; the more severe and homely virtues of prudence and œconomy have been enforced in the writings of a Burney and an Edgeworth. Writers of their good sense have observed, that while these compositions cherished even a romantic degree of sensibility, the duties that have less brilliancy to recommend them were neglected. Where can be found a more striking lesson against unfeeling dissipation than the story of the *Harrels*? Where have order, neatness, industry, sobriety, been recommended with more strength than in the agreeable tales of Miss Edgeworth? If a parent wishes his child to avoid caprice, irregularities of temper, procrastination, coquetry, affectation,—all those faults and blemishes which undermine family happiness, and destroy the every-day comforts of common life,—whence can he derive more impressive morality than from the same source? When works of fancy are thus made subservient to the improvement of the rising generation, they certainly stand on a higher ground than

mere entertainment, and we revere while we admire.

Some knowledge of the world is also gained by these writings, imperfect indeed, but attained with more ease, and attended with less danger, than by mixing in real life. If the stage is a mirror of life, so is the novel, and perhaps a more accurate one, as less is sacrificed to effect and representation. There are many descriptions of characters in the busy world, which a young woman in the retired scenes of life hardly meets with at all, and many whom it is safer to read of than to meet; and to either sex it must be desirable that the first impressions of fraud, selfishness, profligacy and perfidy should be connected, as in good novels they always will be, with infamy and ruin. At any rate, it is safer to meet with a bad character in the pages of a fictitious story, than in the polluted walks of life; but an author solicitous for the morals of his readers will be sparing in the introduction of such characters.—It is an aphorism of Pope,

“Vice is a monster of such frightful mien
As to be hated, needs but to be seen.”

But he adds,

“But seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.”

Indeed the former assertion is not true without considerable modifications. If presented in its naked deformity, vice will indeed give disgust; but it may be so surrounded with splendid and engaging qualities, that the disgust is lost in admiration. Besides, though the selfish and mean propensities are radically unlovely, it is not the same with those passions which all have felt, and few are even desirous to resist. To present these to the young mind in the glowing colours of a Rousseau or a Madame de Stael is to awaken and increase sensibilities, which it is the office of wise restraint to calm and to moderate. Humour covers the disgust which the grosser vices would occasion; passion veils the danger of the more seducing ones.

After all, the effect of novel-reading must depend, as in every other kind of reading, on the choice which is made. If the looser compositions of this sort are excluded, and the sentimental ones chiefly perused, perhaps the danger lies more in fixing the standard of virtue and delicacy too high for real use, than in debasing it. Generosity is carried to such excess as would soon dissipate even a princely fortune; a weak compassion often allows vice to escape with impunity; an over-strained delicacy, or regard to a rash vow, is allowed to mar all the prospects of a long

life: dangers are despised, and self is annihilated, to a degree that prudence does not warrant, and virtue is far from requiring. The most generous man living, the most affectionate friend, the most dutiful child, would find his character fall far short of the perfections exhibited in a highly-wrought novel.

Love is a passion particularly exaggerated in novels. It forms the chief interest of, by far, the greater part of them. In order to increase this interest, a false idea is given of the importance of the passion. It occupies the serious hours of life; events all hinge upon it; every thing gives way to its influence, and no length of time wears it out. When a young lady, having imbibed these notions, comes into the world, she finds that this formidable passion acts a very subordinate part on the great theatre of the world; that its vivid sensations are mostly limited to a very early period; and that it is by no means, as the poet sings,

“All the colour of remaining life.”

She will find but few minds susceptible of its more delicate influences. Where it is really felt, she will see it continually overcome by duty, by prudence, or merely by a regard for

the show and splendour of life ; and that in fact it has a very small share in the transactions of the busy world, and is often little consulted even in choosing a partner for life. In civilized life both men and women acquire so early a command over their passions, that the strongest of them are taught to give way to circumstances, and a moderate liking will appear apathy itself, to one accustomed to see the passion painted in its most glowing colours. Least of all will a course of novels prepare a young lady for the neglect and tedium of life which she is perhaps doomed to encounter. If the novels she reads are virtuous, she has learned how to arm herself with proper reserve against the ardour of her lover ; she has been instructed how to behave with the utmost propriety when run away with, like *Miss Byron*, or locked up by a cruel parent, like *Clarissa* ; but she is not prepared for indifference and neglect. Though young and beautiful, she may see her youth and beauty pass away without conquests, and the monotony of her life will be apt to appear more insipid when contrasted with scenes of perpetual courtship and passion.

It may be added with regard to the knowledge of the world, which, it is allowed, these writings are calculated in some degree to give, that, let them

be as well written and with as much attention to real life and manners as they can possibly be, they will in some respects give false ideas, from the very nature of fictitious writing. Every such work is a *whole*, in which the fates and fortunes of the personages are brought to a conclusion, agreeably to the author's own preconceived idea. Every incident in a well written composition is introduced for a certain purpose, and made to forward a certain plan. A sagacious reader is never disappointed in his forebodings. If a prominent circumstance is presented to him, he lays hold on it, and may be very sure it will introduce some striking event; and if a character has strongly engaged his affections, he need not fear being obliged to withdraw them: the personages never turn out differently from what their first appearance gave him a right to expect; they gradually open, indeed; they may surprise, but they never disappoint him. Even from the elegance of a name he may give a guess at the amenity of the character. But real life is a kind of chance-medley, consisting of many unconnected scenes. The great author of the drama of life has not finished his piece; but the author must finish his; and vice must be punished and virtue rewarded in the compass of a few vo-

lumes ; and it is a fault in *his* composition if every circumstance does not answer the reasonable expectations of the reader. But in real life our reasonable expectations are often disappointed ; many incidents occur which are like “ passages that lead to nothing,” and characters occasionally turn out quite different from what our fond expectations have led us to expect.

In short, the reader of a novel forms his expectations from what he supposes passes in the mind of the author, and guesses rightly at his intentions, but would often guess wrong if he were considering the real course of nature. It was very probable, at some periods of his history, that *Gil Blas*, if a real character, would come to be hanged ; but the practised novel-reader knows well that no such event can await the hero of the tale. Let us suppose a person speculating on the character of *Tom Jones* as the production of an author, whose business it is pleasingly to interest his readers. He has no doubt but that, in spite of his irregularities and distresses, his history will come to an agreeable termination. He has no doubt but that his parents will be discovered in due time ; he has no doubt but that his love for *Sophia* will be rewarded sooner or later with her hand ; he has no

doubt of the constancy of that young lady, or of their entire happiness after marriage. And why does he foresee all this? Not from the real tendencies of things, but from what he has discovered of the author's intentions. But what would have been the probability in real life? Why, that the parents would either never have been found, or have proved to be persons of no consequence—that *Jones* would pass from one vicious indulgence to another, till his natural good disposition was quite smothered under his irregularities—that *Sophia* would either have married her lover clandestinely, and have been poor and unhappy, or she would have conquered her passion and married some country gentleman with whom she would have lived in moderate happiness, according to the usual routine of married life. But the author would have done very ill so to have constructed his story. If *Booth* had been a real character, it is probable his *Amelia* and her family would not only have been brought to poverty, but left in it; but to the reader it is much more probable that by some means or other they will be rescued from it, and left in possession of all the comforts of life. It is *probable* in *Zeluco* that the detestable husband will some way or other be got rid of;

but woe to the young lady, who, when married, should be led, by contemplating the possibility of such an event, to cherish a passion which ought to be entirely relinquished!

Though a great deal of trash is every season poured out upon the public from the English presses, yet in general our novels are not vicious; the food has neither flavour nor nourishment, but at least it is not poisoned. Our national taste and habits are still turned towards domestic life and matrimonial happiness, and the chief harm done by a circulating library is occasioned by the frivolity of its furniture, and the loss of time incurred. Now and then a girl perhaps may be led by them to elope with a coxcomb; or, if she is handsome, to expect the homage of a *Sir Harry* or *My lord*, instead of the plain tradesman suitable to her situation in life; but she will not have her mind contaminated with such scenes and ideas as Crebillon, Louvet, and others of that class have published in France.

And indeed, notwithstanding the many paltry books of this kind published in the course of every year, it may safely be affirmed that we have more good writers in this walk living at the present time, than at any period since the days of Richard-

son and Fielding. A very great proportion of these are ladies : and surely it will not be said that either taste or morals have been losers by their taking the pen in hand. The names of D'Arblay, Edgeworth, Inchbald, Radcliffe, and a number more, will vindicate this assertion.

No small proportion of modern novels have been devoted to recommend, or to mark with reprobation, those systems of philosophy or politics which have raised so much ferment of late years. Mr. Holcroft's *Anna St. Ives* is of this number : its beauties, and beauties it certainly has, do not make amends for its absurdities. What can be more absurd than to represent a young lady gravely considering, in the disposal of her hand, how she shall promote the greatest possible good of the system ? Mr. Holcroft was a man of strong powers, and his novels are by no means without merit, but his satire is often partial, and his representations of life unfair. On the other side may be reckoned *The modern Philosophers*, and the novels of Mrs. West. In the war of systems these light skirmishing troops have been often employed with great effect ; and, so long as they are content with fair, general warfare, without taking aim at individuals, are perfectly allowable. We have lately

seen the gravest theological discussions presented to the world under the attractive form of a novel, and with a success which seems to show that the interest, even of the generality of readers, is most strongly excited when some serious end is kept in view.

It is not the intention in these slight remarks to enumerate those of the present day who have successfully entertained the public; otherwise Mr. Cumberland might be mentioned, that veteran in every field of literature; otherwise a tribute ought to be paid to the peculiarly pathetic powers of Mrs. Opie; nor would it be possible to forget the very striking and original novel of *Caleb Williams*, in which the author, without the assistance of any of the common events or feelings on which these stories generally turn, has kept up the curiosity and interest of the reader in the most lively manner; nor his *St. Leon*, the ingenious speculation of a philosophical mind, which is also much out of the common track. It will bear an advantageous comparison with Swift's picture of the *Strulbrugs* in his *Voyage to Laputa*, the tendency of which seems to be to repress the wish of never-ending life in this world: but in fact it does not bear at all upon the question, for no one ever did wish for im-

mortal life without immortal youth to accompany it, the one wish being as easily formed as the other ; but *St. Leon* shows, from a variety of striking circumstances, that both together would pall, and that an immortal *human* creature would grow an insulated unhappy being.

With regard to this particular selection, it presents a series of some of the most approved novels, from the first regular productions of the kind to the present time : they are of very different degrees of merit ; but none, it is hoped, so destitute of it as not to afford entertainment. Variety in manner has been attended to. As to the rest, no two people probably would make the same choice, nor indeed the same person at any distance of time. A few of superior merit were chosen without difficulty, but the list was not completed without frequent hesitation. Some regard it has been thought proper to pay to the taste and preference of the public, as was but reasonable in an undertaking in which their preference was to indemnify those who are at the expense and risk of the publication. Copyright also was not to be intruded on, and the number of volumes was determined by the booksellers. Some perhaps may think that too much importance has been already given to a

subject so frivolous, but a discriminating taste is no where more called for than with regard to a species of books which every body reads. It was said by Fletcher of Saltoun, "Let me make the ballads of a nation, and I care not who makes the laws." Might it not be said with as much propriety, Let me make the novels of a country, and let who will make the systems?

RICHARDSON.

SAMUEL RICHARDSON, the first English author who has given celebrity to the modern novel, was born in the year 1689, at some place in Derbyshire, but in what particular town is not known, as he, from some reason or other, always avoided mentioning the place of his birth. This reserve could not well spring from a desire of concealing the obscurity of his origin, since he has himself freely mentioned it in his letters to his friends. His father was a joiner, ingenious in his profession, and respectable in his character. He was in flourishing business in London, and much noticed, says his son, by the duke of Monmouth, after whose defeat and death he thought it expedient to retire into the country, which was the occasion of his settling in Derbyshire; and there our author spent the early years of his life. He was at first intended for the church, for which profession he was well suited by his seriousness and love of letters; but his father having a numerous family, and being, besides, in declining circumstances, was not able to allow him a liberal education. Though he did not go to business till sixteen,

it is probable he enjoyed very slender advantages of school-learning. Some of his admirers have wished to raise his character by affirming that he possessed a knowledge of the classics ; but his own assertions are frequent in his letters, that he was acquainted with no language but his own, not even French. His deficiencies in this respect he often lamented, and it is certain his style is as remote as possible from that of a scholar. It abounds with colloquial vulgarisms, and has neither that precision nor that tincture of classic elegance which is generally the result of an early familiarity with the best models. Richardson was however always fond of reading, and still more of narrating. Some anecdotes are preserved in his letters which show very strongly the early bent of his genius. It appears that he was not fond of the usual amusements of boys, but used very early to exercise his invention by gathering his schoolfellows round him, and telling them affecting stories ; and he then wrote " A little history of a servant man who was preferred by a young lady to a great lord who was a libertine." All his stories, he tells us, had a good moral ; they were not stories of genii and fairies, but of life, and probably of low life. It was indeed a peculiarity in him, that he was fond of two things which boys in general have rather an aversion to ; letter-writing, and the company of the other sex. At the early age of thirteen he was a favourite with all the girls in the neighbourhood who were fond of books. He used to read to them as they sat at work with their needles ; he also was

the confident of their secrets, and wrote or corrected their love-letters for them. Even before that age he had written an anonymous letter of grave advice to an elderly widow lady. Who does not see that his most admired works are only the expansion of those talents which in the germ prompted his earliest efforts?

Human nature is human nature in every class: the hopes and the fears, the perplexities and the struggles, of these low-bred girls, in probably an obscure village, supplied the future author with those ideas which, by their gradual development, produced the characters of a *Clarissa* or a *Clementina*.—In the mean time years went on; and it being incumbent on him to fix on some business, as his father could not bring him up to a profession, he chose that of a printer, chiefly, as he informs us, because he thought it would gratify his thirst for reading; and he was bound apprentice to Mr. Wilde of Stationers' Hall in the year 1706. He did not however find it easy to gratify this thirst, though the stream ran by his lips. He served a severe master, and was obliged, greatly to the injury of his constitution, to steal his reading from the hours of rest and relaxation; and so conscientious was he, that on these occasions he always, as he informs us, purchased his own candle. He was at the same time so diligent in his proper business that his master used to call him the pillar of his house.

After the expiration of his apprenticeship, our author continued five or six years working as a compositor and corrector of the press to a print-

ing-office, and part of the time as an overseer ; and, at length thus working his way upwards into daylight, he took up his freedom, and set up for himself ; at first in a court in Fleet-street, from whence, as his business grew more extensive, he removed into Salisbury-court.

Richardson was not one of those who make genius an excuse for idleness. He had been diligent and conscientious as an apprentice, he was assiduous and liberal as a master. Besides the proper work of a printer, he did a good deal of business for the booksellers, in writing for them indexes, prefaces, and, as he styles them, honest dedications. These humble employments tended to facilitate to him the use and management of the pen. Mr. Richardson's punctuality, and the honour and generosity of his dealings, soon gained him friends, and his business greatly flourished. He printed for a while *The True Briton*, a periodical paper, published in 1723, under the auspices of the Duke of Wharton, who, at that time, was endeavouring to foment a spirit of opposition in the city ; and, to gain popularity, became a member of the wax-chandlers' company. Richardson, though his principles were very different, was intimate with him, as was also, in early life, Dr. Young. Some of the numbers of *The True Briton* were prosecuted ; but Mr. R. escaped, as his name did not appear. He was engaged some time in printing a newspaper, called *The Daily Journal*, and afterwards, *The Daily Gazetteer*. Through the interest of the speaker, Mr. Onslow, he had the printing

of the Journals of the House of Commons, in twenty-six volumes, folio. Mr. Onslow had a great regard for him, and often received him at his house in Ember-court. Polite regards are sometimes more easily obtained than money from the court end of the town. Mr. Richardson did not find this branch of his business the one which yielded him the quickest returns. He thus writes to his friend Aaron Hill: "As to my silence, I have been at one time exceedingly busy in getting ready some volumes of Journals, to entitle myself to a payment which yet I never had, no, not to the value of a shilling, though the debt is upwards of three thousand pounds, and though I have pressed for it, and been excessively pressed for the want of it."

He was chosen master of his company, an office which, in the stationers' company, is not only honourable but lucrative, in 1754; on which occasion one of his friends tells him, that though he did not doubt his going very well through every other part of the duty, he feared his habitual abstemiousness would allow him to make but a very poor figure at the city feasts. His indulgencies were not of the sensual kind—he had, according to the salutary custom of the London citizens, a country residence; first at North-end, near Hammersmith, and afterwards at Parson's-green, where he spent the time he could spare from business, and seldom without visitors. He loved to encourage diligence and early rising amongst his journeymen, and often hid a half-crown amongst the letters, so that the first who came to work in a morning

might find it. At other times he brought, for the same purpose, fruit from his garden.

In addition to his other business, Mr. Richardson purchased, in 1760, a moiety of the patent of law printer to his majesty, which department of his business he carried on in partnership with Miss Catharine Lintot. From all these sources he was enabled to make that comfortable provision for a rising family, which patient industry, judiciously directed, will, generally, in this country, enable a man to procure.

But the genius of Richardson was not destined to be for ever employed in ushering into the world the productions of others. His first work was his *Pamela*. It grew out of the following circumstance. The booksellers, for whom it has been mentioned that he had occasionally employed his pen, had desired him to give them a volume of familiar letters upon various supposed occasions. He began ;—but letter producing letter it grew into a story, and was given to the public under the title of *The History of Pamela*. It appeared first in two volumes ; two more were added afterwards. The idea the author set out with of writing letters for people of rather the lower class, probably determined him to the station of his heroine and the simplicity of her language.

The author's object in *Pamela* is twofold : to reclaim a libertine by the influence of virtuous affection, and to conduct virtue safe and triumphant through the severest trials, to an honourable reward. For this purpose Pamela, a

young girl, born of poor but pious and worthy parents, taken by a lady of fashion to wait upon her person, and brought up by her with great tenderness and attention to her improvement, is, after the lady's death, at which event the story opens, exposed to the solicitations of her youthful master, the only son of her benefactress. The story is carried on by letters, chiefly between Pamela and her father and mother. Her youth and innocence render her, for some time, unsuspecting of the passion she has inspired; and, when she can no longer misunderstand the purposes of her master, she prepares to leave his house; but he detains her under various pretences, and attempts liberties with her person, which she resists with firmness, as well as his pecuniary offers; though not disinclined to his person, and though she has no resource, on the supposition of leaving him, but to return to hard country labour. Her behaviour is all the while full of humility and respect to her master in every instance consistent with the defence of her honour. Her master, who, though young, is a practised libertine, finding her protected by the watchful advice of her parents, and by the care of a virtuous house-keeper, who had belonged to his mother, determines to convey her to a place where she shall be entirely in his power. Under pretence, therefore, of sending her home to her parents, he has her conveyed to another of his seats, where she is absolutely confined, under the guardianship of an abandoned woman, whose office it has been to minister to his pleasures. The poor Pamela forms many schemes to get away, and attempts, by means

of a young clergyman, to engage some of the families of the neighbourhood in her favour, but without effect. She then endeavours to escape alone, and actually gets through a barred window into the garden, from whence she hopes to escape into the fields, though ignorant of any one who will receive her; but she falls, and bruises herself in attempting to get over the high brick wall. Her sufferings in this attempt are affectingly described. Finding all her schemes abortive, she is greatly tempted to free herself from the danger of dishonour, by throwing herself into the pond; but considerations of piety at length prevail, and she determines to trust to Providence. Her master, after many ineffectual attempts to vanquish her resistance, begins to relent, professes honourable love to her; and, after a severe struggle between his passion and his pride of birth and fortune, offers her his hand in marriage. Pamela acknowledges her love for him, and accepts (almost upon her knees, it must be allowed,) his proposal. Difficulties remain to be got over with Lady Davers, a proud and termagant woman of quality, sister to Mr. B.; but the sweetness and prudence of Pamela overcome her dislike, and the whole concludes with the perfect happiness of the wedded pair.

Such is the outline of this first work of our author, which was published in 1740. It was received with a burst of applause from all ranks of people. The novelty of the plan, the strokes of nature and pathos with which the work abounds, the simplicity of the language, the sentiments of piety and virtue that are brought forward, took at once the taste of the public.

Numberless were the compliments Mr. Richardson received upon it as soon as he was known to be the author. It was not only read by all who sought entertainment, but was considered as a work of such excellent *moral* tendency that it attracted the notice of grave divines, and was even recommended from the pulpit. It is impossible to peruse without astonishment the high eulogiums that were given to the work in this particular view. Mr. Pope declared it would do more good than many volumes of sermons. Mr. Lucas, the esteemed author of *The Search after Happiness*, a much graver character than Pope, and not personally acquainted with the author, calls it "the best book ever published, and calculated to do most good." The compliments of the author's friends in their letters were quite extravagant. It was immediately translated into French and Dutch.

The fame of this once favourite work is now somewhat tarnished by time, as well as eclipsed by the author's subsequent publications; but the enthusiasm with which it was received, shows incontrovertibly, that a *novel* written on the side of virtue was considered as a new experiment.

Appretiating it at this distance of time, we must acknowledge that the faults are great, but the beauties are genuine. The character of Pamela, so long as her sole object was to resist her master's attempts, is beautifully drawn, with many affecting incidents, and little strokes of nature. Her innocent prattle to Mrs. Jervis, the rustic dress in which she equips herself,

when determined to leave her place, her stealing down to the kitchen to try if she could scour the pewter, in order to accustom herself to coarse household work—"I see I could do it," says she, "it only blistered my hand in two places;" the sudden spring she gives on seeing her father, by which she overturns the card-table, and the affecting account of her sufferings on attempting to make her escape, are all worthy of a master-hand. There are not many under-characters in this work; the most pleasing, and perhaps the best sustained, of the whole, are those of Goodman Andrews and his wife, Pamela's father and mother. It would not be easy to find a prettier picture of low life, and of true English low life, in its most respectable garb; made respectable by strict honesty, humility, patience of labour, and domestic affection; the whole rendered saintly and venerable by a touching air of piety and resignation, which pervades all their sentiments. The behaviour of the old man, when he walks to Mr. B.'s to inquire after his child, and his humble grief, are truly pathetic. The language of the good couple is simple, without being vulgar. It is not the simplicity of Arcadian shepherds: it is such as people in low life, with the delicacy of a virtuous mind, might fall into without any other advantages than a Bible education. It is the simplicity of an English cottage.

The character of Mr. B. himself is drawn with less address than that of any one in the piece; he is proud, stern, selfish, forbidding, (selfish, that is to say, in his love, for he has

generosity enough in money matters,) and his ideas of the authority of a husband are so high, that it is not easy to conceive of Pamela's being rewarded by marrying him, unless her regard for external circumstances was greater than the author would wish to have supposed. The moral of this piece is more dubious than, in his lifetime, the author's friends were willing to allow. So long as Pamela is solely occupied in schemes to escape from her persecutor, her virtuous resistance obtains our unqualified approbation; but from the moment she begins to entertain hopes of marrying him, we admire her guarded prudence, rather than her purity of mind. She has an end in view, an interested end; and we can only consider her as the conscious possessor of a treasure, which she is wisely resolved not to part with but for its just price. In real life we should perhaps consider Pamela at this period as an interested girl, and it is difficult to imagine how a young woman of so much purity of mind should feel her affections engaged to a man during a series of the grossest attempts upon her virtue, and who, moreover, used no gentle arts of seduction, but sought to awe her as a master and intimidate her with sternness, rather than to win upon her as a lover.

Indeed, the excessive humility and gratitude expressed by herself and her parents on her exaltation, show a regard to rank and riches beyond the just measure of an independent mind. The pious Goodman Andrews should not have thought his virtuous daughter so infinitely be-

neath her licentious master, who, after all, married her to gratify his own passions.

The indelicate scenes in this novel have been justly found fault with, and are, indeed, totally indefensible. Dr. Watts, to whom he sent the volumes, instead of compliments, writes him word, that he understands the ladies complain they cannot read them without blushing.

The third and fourth volumes are much inferior to the first two: they are indeed superfluous to the story, which is properly terminated with the marriage of Pamela; but prolixity was the fault of this author. Goldoni has written two plays on the subject of this novel; his *Pamela Nubile* and *Pamela Maritata*. It is well known that Fielding, who started in his career of fame soon after Richardson, wrote his *Joseph Andrews* in ridicule of *Pamela*. Richardson was exceedingly hurt at this, the more so as they had been upon good terms, and he was very intimate with Fielding's two sisters. He never appears cordially to have forgiven it: perhaps it was hardly in human nature that he should; and he always speaks in his letters with great asperity of *Tom Jones*, more indeed than was quite graceful in a rival author. Richardson and Fielding possessed very different excellencies.—Fielding had all the ease which Richardson wanted, a genuine flow of humour, and a rich variety of comic character; nor was he wanting in strokes of an amiable sensibility: but he could not describe a consistently virtuous character, and in deep pathos he was far excelled by his rival.

But *Pamela*, captivating as the publication had proved to be, showed only the dawn of its author's genius, who, encouraged by the applauses and benefited by the criticisms which he had received, proceeded to plan a new work, the first two volumes of which were published eight years after the preceding.

The production upon which the fame of Richardson is principally founded, that which will transmit his name to posterity as one of the first geniuses of the age in which he lived, is undoubtedly his *Clarissa*. Nothing can be more simple than the story:—A young lady, pressed by her parents to marry a man every way disagreeable to her, and placed under the most cruel restraint, leaves her father's house, and throws herself upon the protection of her lover, a man of sense and spirit, but a libertine. When he finds her in his power, he artfully declines marriage, and conveys her to a house kept for the worst of purposes. There, after many fruitless attempts to ensnare her virtue, he at length violates her person. She escapes from further outrage: he finds her out in her retreat; offers her marriage, which she rejects. Her friends are obdurate. She retires to solitary lodgings; grief and shame overwhelm her, and she dies broken-hearted. Her friends lament their severity when too late. Her violator is transiently stung with remorse, but not reformed; he leaves the kingdom in order to dissipate his chagrin, and is killed in a duel by a relation of the lady's.

On this slight foundation, and on a story not very agreeable or promising in its rude outline,

has our author founded a most pathetic tale, and raised a noble temple to female virtue. The first volumes are somewhat tedious, from the prolixity incident to letter-writing, and require a persevering reader to get through them : but the circumstantial manner of writing which Richardson practised, has the advantage of making the reader thoroughly acquainted with those in whose fate he is to be interested. In consequence of this, our feelings are not transient, elicited here and there by a pathetic stroke ; but we regard his characters as real personages, whom we know and converse with, and whose fate remains to be decided in the course of events. The characters, much more numerous than in *Pamela*, are all distinctly drawn and well preserved, and there is a proper contrast and variety in the casting of the parts. The plot, as we have seen, is simple, and no under-plots interfere with the main design. No digressions, no episodes. It is wonderful that without these helps of common writers, he could support a work of such length. With *Clarissa* it begins, —with *Clarissa* it ends. We do not come upon unexpected adventures and wonderful recognitions, by quick turns and surprises : we see her fate from afar, as it were through a long avenue, the gradual approach to which, without ever losing sight of the object, has more of simplicity and grandeur than the most cunning labyrinth that can be contrived by art. In the approach to the modern country-seat, we are made to catch transiently a side-view of it through an opening of the trees, or to burst upon it from a

sudden turning in the road ; but the old mansion stood full in the eye of the traveller, as he drew near it, contemplating its turrets, which grew larger and more distinct every step that he advanced, and leisurely filling his eye and his imagination with still increasing ideas of its magnificence.—As the work advances, the character rises ; the distress is deepened ; our hearts are torn with pity and indignation ; bursts of grief succeed one another, till at length the mind is composed and harmonized with emotions of milder sorrow ; we are calmed into resignation, elevated with pious hope, and dismissed glowing with the conscious triumphs of virtue.

The first group which presents itself is that of the Harlowe family. They are sufficiently discriminated, yet preserve a family likeness. The stern father, the passionate and dark-souled brother, the envious and ill-natured sister, the money-loving uncles, the gentle but weak-spirited mother, are all assimilated by that stiffness, love of parade, and solemnity, which is thrown over the whole, and by the interested family views in which they all concur. Miss Howe is a young lady of great generosity and ardent feelings, with a high spirit and some love of teasing, which she exercises on her mother, a managing and notable widow lady, and on her humble servant Mr. Hickman, a man deserving of her esteem, but prim and formal in his manner. Miss Howe is a character of strong lights and shades, but her warmest affections are all along directed to her friend ; and the correspond-

ence between them is made the great vehicle of Clarissa's narrative of events, as that between Lovelace and his friend Belford is of *his* schemes and designs. The character of Clarissa herself is very highly wrought : she has all the grace, and dignity, and delicacy, of a finished model of female excellence. Her duty to her parents is implicit, except in the article of sacrificing herself to a man utterly disgusting to her ; and she bears with the greatest meekness the ill usage she receives from the other branches of the family. Duty, indeed, is the great principle of her conduct. Her affections are always completely under command ; and her going off with Lovelace appears a step she was betrayed, not persuaded, into. His persuasions she had withstood ; and it was fear, not love, that at last precipitated her into his protection. If, therefore, the author meant to represent her subsequent misfortunes as a punishment, he has scarcely made her faulty enough. That a young lady has eloped from her father's house with a libertine, sounds, indeed, like a grave offence ; but the fault, when it is examined into, is softened and shaded off by such a variety of circumstances, that it becomes almost evanescent. Who that reads the treatment she experienced, does not wonder at her long-suffering ? After Clarissa finds herself, against her will and intention, in the power of her lover, the story becomes, for a while, a game at chess, in which both parties exert great skill and presence of mind, and quick observation of each other's motions. Not a moment of weakness does Clarissa betray ; and

she only loses the game because she plays fairly and with integrity, while he is guilty of the basest frauds.

During this part of the story, the generality of readers are perhaps inclined to wish that Lovelace should give up his wicked intentions, reform, and make Clarissa happy in the marriage state. This was the conclusion which Lady Bradshaigh so vehemently and passionately urged the author to adopt. But when the unfeeling character of Lovelace proceeds to deeper and darker wickedness; when his unrelenting cruelty meditates, and actually perpetrates, the last unmanly outrage upon unprotected innocence and virtue,—the heart surely cannot have right feelings that does not cordially detest so black a villain, notwithstanding the agreeable qualities which are thrown into his character; and that woman must have little delicacy, who does not feel that his crime has raised an eternal wall of separation between him and the victim of his treachery, whatever affection she might have previously entertained for him. Yet it is said by some, that the author has made Lovelace too agreeable, and his character has been much the object of criticism. But a little reflection will show us, that the author had a more difficult part to manage, in drawing his character, than that of any other in the work, and that he could not well have made him different from what he is. If he had drawn a mean-spirited dark villain, without any specious qualities, his Clarissa would have been degraded. Lovelace, as he is to win the affections of the heroine, is neces-

sarily, in some sort, the hero of the piece, and no one in it must be permitted to outshine him. The author, therefore, gives him wit and spirit, and courage, and generosity, and manly genteel address, and also transient gleams of feeling, and transient stings of remorse; so that we are often led to hope he may follow his better angel, and give up his atrocious designs. This the author has done, and less he could not do, for the man whom *Clarissa* was inclined to favour. Besides, if it was part of his intention to warn young women against placing their affections upon libertines, it was certainly only against the agreeable ones of that class that he had any occasion to warn them. He tells us in one of his letters, that finding he had made him too much a favourite, he had thrown in some darker shades to obviate the objection; and surely the shades are dark enough. In one particular, however, the author might perhaps have improved the moral effect of the work; he might have given more of horror to the last scene of *Lovelace's* life. When *Clarissa* and he were finally separated, there was no occasion to keep measures with him; and why should *Belton* die a death of so much horror, and *Lovelace* of calm composure and self-possession? *Lovelace* dies in a duel, admirably well described, in which he behaves with the cool intrepidity of a gentleman and a man of spirit. *Colonel Morden* could not behave better. Some tender strokes are thrown in on his parting with *Belford*, and on other occasions, tending to interest the reader in his favour; and his last words, "Let

this expiate," are manifestly intended to do away our resentment, and leave a favourable impression on our minds with regard to his future prospects. Something, indeed, is mentioned of impatience, and a desire of life; but Richardson *could* have drawn a scene which would have made us turn with horror from the features of the gay, the agreeable seducer, when changed into the agonizing countenance of the despairing self-accuser.

But if the author might have improved in this respect the character of Lovelace, that of Clarissa comes up to all the ideas we can form of female loveliness and dignified suffering. The first scenes with her hard-hearted family show the severe struggles she had with herself, before she could withdraw her obedience from her parents. The measure of that obedience in Richardson's mind was very high; and therefore Clarissa seems all along, rather to lament the cruelty, than to resent the injustice, of imposing a husband upon her without her own consent. It is easy to see she would have thought it her duty to comply, if he had not been quite so disagreeable. The mother is a very mean character; she gives a tacit permission to Clarissa to correspond with Lovelace to prevent mischief, and yet consents to be the tool of the family in persecuting her innocent and generous daughter;—but this was her duty to her husband!—Yet, distressing as Clarissa's situation is in her father's house, the author has had the address to make the reader feel, the moment she has got out of it, that he would give the world to have her safe back again. Nothing takes place of

that pleasure and endearment which might naturally be expected on the meeting of two lovers: we feel that she has been hunted into the toils, and that every avenue is closed against her escape. No young person, on reading *Clarissa*, even at this period of the story, can think of putting herself into the power of a lover, without annexing to it the strongest sense of degradation and anxiety. A great deal of contrivance is expended by the author, in the various plots set on foot by Lovelace, to keep his victim tolerably easy in her ambiguous situation; and though some of these are tedious, it was necessary, for *Clarissa's* honour, to make the reader sensible that she had an inextricable net wound around her, and that it was not owing to her want of prudence or vigilance that she did not escape. In the mean time the wit of Lovelace and the sprightliness of Miss Howe prevent monotony. In one instance, however, *Clarissa* certainly sins against the delicacy of her character, that is, in allowing herself to be made a show of to the loose companions of Lovelace:—But, how does her character rise, when we come to the more distressful scenes; the view of her horror, when, deluded by the pretended relations, she reenters the fatal house; her temporary insanity after the outrage, in which she so affectingly holds up to Lovelace the license he had procured; and her dignified behaviour when she first sees her ravisher, after the perpetration of his crime. What finer subject could be presented to the painter, than that in which *Clarissa* grasps the penknife in her hand, “her eyes lifted up to heaven, the whites of them only visible,”

ready to plunge it in her breast, to preserve herself from further outrage; Lovelace, aghast with terror, and speechless, thrown back to the further end of the room!—or the prison scene, where she is represented kneeling amidst the gloom and horror of the dismal abode; illuminating, as it were, the dark chamber; her face reclining on her crossed arms, her white garments floating round her in the negligence of woe; Belford contemplating her with respectful commiseration:—or the scene of calmer but heart-piercing sorrow, in the interview Colonel Morden has with her in her dying moments: She is represented “fallen into a slumber in her elbow-chair, leaning on the widow Lovick, whose left arm is around her neck; one faded cheek resting on the good woman’s bosom, the kindly warmth of which had overspread it with a faintish flush, the other pale and hollow, as if already iced over by death; her hands, the blueness of the veins contrasting their whiteness, hanging lifelessly before her, the widow’s tears dropping unfelt upon her face—Colonel Morden, with his arms folded, gazing on her in silence, her coffin just appearing behind a screen:” What admiration, what reverence does the author inspire us with for the innocent sufferer, —the sufferings too of such a peculiar nature!

There is something in virgin purity, to which the imagination willingly pays homage. In all ages, something saintly has been attached to the idea of unblemished chastity. Hence the dignity of the lady in *Comus*; hence the interest we take in those whose holy vows have shrowd-

ed them from even the wanton glances of an assailer ; hence the supposed virtue of prayers

“ From fasting maids whose minds are dedicate,
 ————— to nothing earthly.”

Beauty is a flower which was meant in due time to be gathered ; but it attracts the fondest admiration whilst still on the stalk, before it has felt the touch of any rude hand :

“ *Sic virgo, dum intacta manet, dum cara suis est.*”

It was reserved for Richardson to overcome all circumstances of dishonour and disgrace, and to throw a splendour round the *violated virgin*, more radiant than she possessed in her first bloom. He has made the flower, which grew

“ ————— sweet to sense, and lovely to the eye,”

throw out a richer fragrance *after* “ the cruel spoiler has *cropped the fair rose and rifled its sweetness.*” He has drawn the triumph of mental chastity ; he has drawn it uncontaminated, untarnished, and incapable of mingling with pollution.—The scenes which follow the death of the heroine, exhibit grief in an affecting variety of forms, as it is modified by the characters of different survivors. They run into considerable length ; but we have been so deeply interested, that we feel it a relief to have our grief drawn off, as it were, by a variety of sluices, and we are glad not to be dismissed till we have shed tears, even to satiety. We enjoy, besides, the punishment of the Harlowes, in the contemplation of their merited anguish. Sentiments of

piety pervade the whole work ; but the death-bed of Clarissa, her Christian forgiveness, and her meek resignation, are particularly edifying. Richardson loved to draw death-beds. He seems to have imbibed, from his friend Dr. Young, an opinion of their being a touchstone of merit or demerit. There are three described in this work, besides that of Lovelace : that, it has already been mentioned, would have had a more moral effect if it had been fuller of horror. Lovelace is made to declare, that he cannot be totally unhappy, whatever be his own lot in a future state, if he is allowed to contemplate the happiness of Clarissa : He exclaims,

“ Can I be at worst? avert that worst,
O thou Supreme, who only canst avert it !
So much a wretch, so very far abandon’d,
But that I must, even in the horrid’st gloom,
Reap intervenient joy ; at least, some respite
From pain and anguish in her bliss.”

This is a sentiment much too generous for a Lovelace.—The author has shown himself embarrassed with regard to the duel by his principles, which forbade duelling. Yet it was necessary to dispatch Lovelace ; for what family could sit down with such an injury unpunished ? or which of his readers could be satisfied to see the perpetrator of so much mischief escape vengeance ? Colonel Morden was a man of the world, acted upon the maxims of it, and therefore it seemed hardly necessary to make *him* express regret at having precipitated Lovelace into a future state : Richardson was not then drawing his perfect character, and did not seem

called upon to blame a duel, which in our hearts we cannot, from Colonel Morden, but approve of.

That *Clarissa* is a highly moral work, has been always allowed ;—but what is the moral ? — Is it that a young lady who places her affections upon a libertine, will be deceived and ruined ? Though the author no doubt intended this as one of the conclusions to be drawn, such a maxim has not dignity or force enough in it to be the chief moral of this interesting tale. And it has been already mentioned that *Clarissa* can hardly stand as an example of such a choice, as she never fairly made the choice. On the contrary, she is always ready, both before her elopement and after it, to resign the moderate, the almost insensible predilection she feels for *Lovelace*, to the will of her parents, if she might only be permitted to refuse the object of her aversion. Is she, then, exhibited as a rare pattern of chastity ? Surely this is an idea very degrading to the sex. *Lovelace*, indeed, who has a very bad opinion of women, and thinks that hardly any woman can resist him, talks of trying her virtue, and speaks as if he expected her to fail in the trial. But surely the virtue of *Clarissa* could never have been in the smallest danger. The virtue of *Pamela* was tried, because the pecuniary offers were a temptation which many in her station of life would have yielded to ; and because their different situations in life opposed a bar to their legitimate union, which she might well believe would be insuperable. The virtue of *Werter's Charlotte* was tried, and the virtue of the wife of *Zeluco* was tried,

because the previous marriage of one of the parties made a virtuous union impossible.—But *Clarissa*! a young lady of birth and fortune, marriage completely in her lover's power—she could have felt nothing but indignation at the first idea which entered her mind that he meant to degrade her into a mistress. Was it likely that she, who had shown that her affections were so much under her command while the object of his addresses appeared to be honourable marriage, should not guard against every freedom with the most cautious vigilance, as soon as she experienced a behaviour in him which must at once destroy her esteem for him, and be offensive to her just pride, as well as to her modesty? It is absurd therefore in *Lovelace* to speak of trying her chastity; and the author is not free from blame in favouring the idea that such resistance had any thing in it uncommon, or peculiarly meritorious. But the real moral of *Clarissa* is, that virtue is triumphant in every situation; that in circumstances the most painful and degrading,—in a prison, in a brothel, in grief, in distraction, in despair,—it is still lovely, still commanding, still the object of our veneration, of our fondest affections: that if it is seated on the ground, it can still say with *Constance*,

“Here is my throne; kings, come and bow to it!”

The novelist that has produced this effect has performed his office well, and it is immaterial what particular maxim is selected under the name of a moral, while such are the reader's feelings. If our feelings are in favour of virtue,

the novel is virtuous; if of vice, the novel is vicious. The greatness of *Clarissa* is shown by her separating herself from her lover as soon as she perceives his dishonourable views; in her choosing death rather than a repetition of the outrage; in her rejection of those overtures of marriage, which a common mind might have accepted of, as a refuge against worldly dishonour; in her firm indignant carriage, mixed with calm patience and Christian resignation; and in the greatness of mind with which she views and enjoys the approaches of death, and her meek forgiveness of her unfeeling relations.

In one particular the author has been blamed, and perhaps justly, for encouraging superstition, in representing *Clarissa* as so greatly terrified at the curse laid upon her by her unnatural father. He may be faulty as a moralist, but it has a good dramatic effect; and I question if Richardson went much beyond his own ideas of the efficacy of a parent's curse on this occasion. The too high colouring of some of the scenes has been objected to, as tending to inflame passions which it was the author's professed aim to regulate. He was led to it, in some measure, by the nature of his story; but he seems to have begun writing with a coarseness of ideas in this respect, which he got rid of by degrees. His *Clarissa* is far less objectionable than his *Pamela*; his *Grandison* not at all so. The death of Sinclair is painted with great strength, but excites painful disgust as well as horror; yet, being intended to excite a salutary disgust to the haunts of vice and infamy, perhaps in that light may be

borne with. Its operation is that of a strong medicine, meant to create a nausea. The death of Belton is an admirable piece of painting, and not excelled by any thing in the admired scene of Cardinal Beaufort.

It is not perfectly delicate that Clarissa should have so many interviews with Lovelace after the catastrophe. Clarissa, indeed, could not help it, but the author could. He should only have exhibited them together in those few striking scenes in which our feelings are wound up to the highest pitch. No long parleys, nothing that can be called trivial, should pass between them then. If the reader, on opening casually the book, can doubt of any scene between them, whether it passes before or after the outrage, that scene is one too much.

The character of Lovelace, though laboured with great art, is perhaps, after all, more of a fancy piece than a real portrait of an English libertine. Where is the libertine who would attempt in England the seduction of young women, guarded by birth and respectable situations in life, and friends jealous of their honour, and an education which would set them far out of the reach of any disgraceful overtures? A love of intrigue, rather than a love of pleasure, characterizes Lovelace; he is a cool systematic seducer, and the glory of conquest is what he principally aims at. Had such a character been placed in France, and his gallantries directed to married women, it would have been more natural, and his epistolary memoirs rendered more probable;

but in England Lovelace would have been run through the body, long before he had seen the face of *Clariſſa* or Colonel Morden.

There is an improbability which the author could not well avoid, as it resulted from his plan of carrying on the narrative by letters ; and that is, the tame acquiescence of Belford in a villainy which he all along so strongly disapproves. It is true, as a man of honour, he might think himself obliged not to betray his friend's secrets ; but his disapprobation would certainly have prevented his friend from communicating those secrets. Belford is, in fact, reformed, from the time we first hear of him ; and therefore those intimate communications could not any longer have subsisted. But Belford is a being created in order to carry on the story, and must not be made too strictly the object of criticism. A novel-writer must violate probability somewhere, and a reader ought to make all handsome and generous allowances for it. We should open a book as we enter into a company, well persuaded that we must not expect perfection. In Belford, too, we have a reformed libertine, one whom the reader regards with esteem and affection. Richardson mentions in one of his letters, that Mr. Moore, author of *The Foundling*, had an intention of bringing the story of *Clariſſa* upon the stage, and that Garrick told him he should with great pleasure be the Lovelace of it. The powers of Moore were by no means equal to such an undertaking ; but if they had been greater, the gaiety and spirit of Lovelace, in the hands of Garrick,

would have been too strong for the morality of the piece. We know how great a favourite he was in Ranger.

The publication of *Pamela* occasioned the sensation of surprise and pleasure, which a new author, a new style, a new mode of writing, is calculated to inspire: that of *Clarissa* raised its author at once to the first rank among novelists: it is even more admired by foreigners than by the English themselves. Rousseau, whose *Heloise* alone, perhaps, can divide the palm with *Clarissa*, asserts in a letter to d'Alembert, that nothing was ever written equal to, or approaching it, in any language. Diderot speaks of Richardson with high applause. Dr. Johnson, in his *Life of Rowe*, expresses himself in the following forcible language:

“The character of Lothario seems to have been expanded by Richardson into that of Lovelace; but he has excelled his original in the moral effect of the fiction. Lothario, with gaiety which cannot be hated, and bravery which cannot be despised, retains too much of the spectator's kindness. It was in the power of Richardson alone, to teach us at once esteem and detestation; to make virtuous resentment overpower all the benevolence which wit, and elegance, and courage, naturally excite; and to lose at last the hero in the villain.”

The interest which *Clarissa* excited at the time, was increased by the suspense in which its readers were so long held. In general, the suspense of a reader lasts no longer than the time which is necessary for him to read the book; and, in the case

of a book which is much talked of, very few readers enjoy the full pleasure of the story, as they can scarcely help learning, from some quarter or other, how it is to end. But in this instance, the interval of several months, which was allowed to pass between the publication of the first four volumes and the remaining four, wound up its readers to the highest pitch of enthusiasm; and the pleadings of the author's correspondents for a happy end were as warm and earnest as if they had related to the fate of a real character. To have made a different ending the author well knew would have spoiled his work, yet he could not but have been secretly flattered with seeing the strong impression he had made.

The Abbé Prevost gave a version of *Clarissa* into French, but rather an abridgement than a translation. It was afterwards rendered more faithfully by Le Tourneur. Prevost says, and truly, that *Clarissa* required some softening to adapt it to the more delicate taste of the French. It was also translated into Dutch by Mr. Stinstra, and into German under the auspices of the celebrated Dr. Haller.

Our author was now at the zenith of his fame; but his fancy was not exhausted, nor his powers of writing diminished; and after an interval of between four and five years he again appeared before the public.

After Mr. Richardson had published two works, in each of which the principal character is a female, he determined to give the world an example of a *perfect man*. His laudable design was to unite every thing that is graceful and engaging

in the man of spirit and the fine gentleman, with every moral virtue, and with the observance of the strict rules of Christianity—an arduous undertaking! He was partly stimulated to this design by the attacks of his female disciples, who, in answer to the reproaches he made them of liking Lovelace too well, observed to him, that he had given them nobody else to like:—the virtuous Hickman was too tame and too formal to do justice to his good principles; and, in short, that he had not presented them with one male character on which the imagination might rest with complacency. If he did not wish they should regard men of pleasure with too favourable an eye, it was his duty to provide some one whom they might like upon principle. Upon this idea he determined to give them *A Good Man*, the title by which he always speaks of the work while he is writing it, though he afterwards changed it to that of *Sir Charles Grandison*.

Sir Charles is a man of birth and fortune, endowed with every personal advantage, and master of every fashionable accomplishment. He is placed in a variety of situations, calculated to draw forth the virtues and energies of his character, as a son, a brother, a guardian, a friend, and a lover; and his conduct is every where exemplary. He is a man of address, of knowledge of the world, and makes himself to be respected in different countries, and by all sorts of people, bad as well as good. He is generous without profusion; religious without superstition; complaisant without weakness; firm in his purposes; rapid in the execution of them; jealous of his

honour, yet always open to a generous reconciliation; feeling (at least as the author would have us believe) the passions of human nature, yet always possessing a perfect command over them.

The conduct of this piece differs from that of *Pamela* and *Clarissa* in this respect; that it does not depend upon one great event, but is intended to open and display this character in a variety of lights. The unity of the work, therefore, consists in the reference which every person, and every incident, bears to him who is the hero of it. Of him the author never loses sight after his first appearance, which he makes as soon as the reader has been prepared by the play of some inferior characters, (who, to use a military phrase, *keep the ground* for him,) in a brilliant action, the rescuing the lady he is finally to marry, from the hands of a lawless ravisher.

It was necessary for the execution of the plan, and it is so contrived in fact, that this work should be diversified with a greater variety of characters than his former ones. It has, particularly, many more of the pleasing cast. The author shows in it, that he had improved in the knowledge of life and the genteel world; and there are none of those warm descriptions in it which were justly blamed in its two elder sisters. He has an *enlèvement*, an incident he seems to have been fond of, since it occurs in all the three works; but the object is only marriage, and it is managed with perfect decorum, at the same time that it presents a truly affecting scene. The early part of the novel presents a rich display of incidents and personages. The history of Sir Thomas and Lady Grandison is admirably executed,

and highly moral. The behaviour of Sir Charles to his father's mistress, to his sisters, to his uncle Lord W., to the Danbys, is all excellent, and opens his character to the greatest advantage.— But the chief intrigue of the piece arises from the double love of Sir Charles to Miss Byron and Clementina. A double love, say the critics in that passion, is no love at all; and they will insist upon it, that Sir Charles is all along actuated by compassion solely for both the ladies.

The character of Miss Byron is meant by the author as a model of true female excellence; but it is judiciously kept down, not only with relation to Sir Charles, but to the high-wrought portrait of the Italian lady. Miss Byron is gentle, timid, and somewhat passive; her character has no very prominent feature, except her love for Sir Charles. As she was destined to reward the hero, the author has shown great address in previously interesting his readers in her favour, before we become acquainted with Clementina; so that notwithstanding our admiration for the latter, and the strong feelings she has called out, we all along consider the Italian family as intruders, and are glad, upon the whole, when Sir Charles is disengaged from them. We adore Clementina, but we come *home* to Miss Byron.

Richardson had been accused of giving a coldness to his female characters in the article of love. The accusation was ill-founded; for the circumstances of the story in his two former pieces forbade the display of a very tender sensibility: but he has made ample amends for the imputed omission in his *Grandison*, where he has entered into the passion with all the minute-

ness, and delicacy, and warmth, that could be desired, and shown the female heart to be open to him in all its folds and recesses. In his Olivia, his Harriet, his Emily, his Clementina, he has well exemplified the sentiment of the poet—

“ Love various minds does variously inspire;
In gentle bosoms kindles gentle fire,
Like that of incense on the altar laid;
But raging flames tempestuous souls invade,
A fire which every windy passion blows,
With pride it mounts, and with revenge it glows.”

But as the character of Sir Charles is the most instructive, that of Clementina is the highest effort of genius in this piece. In her, he has drawn a young creature involved in a passion expressed with the utmost innocence and delicacy, yet so strong as to overturn her reason; and afterwards, on the recovery of her reason, after a severe struggle, voluntarily sacrificing that very passion at the shrine of religious principle. Clementina is indeed a heroine, and her conduct is truly noble, because, with her articles of faith, the obstacle was, in reality, insurmountable to a well principled mind. Her faith might be erroneous; but her conduct, grounded on that faith, was just and rational. This sentiment is insisted on, because some good protestants have called Clementina a poor narrow-minded bigot. A bigot she certainly was; but it had been strange if she had not believed the religion in which she had been carefully educated, and she only acted consistently with that belief. It were superfluous to any one who has perused this work, to remark the masterly manner in which the madness of Clementina is painted. Dr. Warton speaks thus of it:

“ I know not whether even the madness of Lear is wrought up and expressed by so many little strokes of nature and passion. It is absolute pedantry to prefer and compare the madness of Orestes, in *Euripides*, to this of Clementina.” There is such a tenderness and innocence in her wanderings, such affecting starts of passion, such a significant woe in her looks and attitudes, such a sanctity of mind, with so much feeling, that he who is not moved with it must resign the pretension of being accessible to fictitious sorrow.”

It is the fault of Richardson that he never knew when to have done with a character. That of Clementina would have been dismissed with dignity after her refusal of Sir Charles ; instead of which he resumes her story in the last volumes, brings her to England, a step little consistent with the delicacy of her character, nor necessary to any event ; and, finally, leaves the reader to conclude that she will be brought to accept the hand of the Count de Belvedere.—How easily and naturally might he have disposed of her in a convent, there to complete the sacrifice she had made of her love to her religion ! He probably would have done so, if a desire of making his piece instructive had not, in this instance, warped his judgement, and restrained his genius. He was in the habit of inveighing to his young friends against romantic ideas of love, and particularly the notion that a first passion could not be conquered*, and he feared it would

* I want to have young people think there is no such mighty business as they are apt to suppose, in conquering a first love.—*Letter to Miss Mulso.*

have a bad effect if he represented the contrary in his works.

But though, in real life, a passion, however strong, will generally give way to time, at least so far as to permit the disappointed party to fill her proper station in social life, and fulfil the relative duties of it with calm complacence, if not with delight, we cannot easily figure to ourselves that Clementina, with such a high-toned mind, and a passion so exalted, a passion that had shaken the very seat of reason in her soul, could, or with so shattered an intellect ought to turn her thoughts to a second lover. Novels will always be different from real life, and therefore always, perhaps, in some degree, dangerous to the young mind: but they must be consistent with themselves; and if the author chose to describe a passion which unhinged the reason of one lady, and was sinking the other to the grave, a catastrophe which we are led to suppose would have been the effect of Miss Byron's final disappointment, he should not then have been scrupulous of allowing it to have its full effect.

The correspondence in these volumes is carried on, for the most part, between Miss Byron and her friends and Lady G. (Sir Charles's sister) on the one side, and Sir Charles and Dr. Bartlett (a respectable clergyman) on the other. Lady G.'s character is sprightly and petulant, and her letters have a good deal of wit, though sometimes it degenerates into flippancy. She resembles Miss Howe, but with less of fire and ardour, and more of levity. She behaves to her husband still more provokingly than that lady to Mr.

Hickman. Notwithstanding, however, the general resemblance just suggested, and a few others that might be pointed out, there is no man, perhaps, who has written so much, and who has less repeated himself, than Richardson. If we may judge by the variety of characters in this, his last publication, the fertility of his fancy was by no means exhausted. Of all the under characters, none is more delightful than Emily Jervois, the young ward of Sir Charles, in the beautiful and touching simplicity with which he has invested her. Her unconscious love for her guardian, arising so naturally, as she advances towards womanhood, from her grateful affection and unbounded esteem for him; her ingenuous shame at the bad conduct of her dissolute mother, and her generosity to that mother on the first symptoms of reformation; together with the *naïveté* which is so happily hit off both in her ideas and her language, render her uncommonly interesting. Mrs. Shirley is a graceful portrait of mild and venerable age. Lady Beauchamp's character gives Sir Charles an opportunity to show the address and dexterous management of a man of the world; Olivia, his virtuous forbearance; the proud Porretta family, his manly spirit, tempered with presence of mind and a guarded prudence; the behaviour of Mr. Lowther, and the French surgeons, show a knowledge of professional character; and various parts of the work attest the author's improvement in general information, and more enlarged views of life.

There is not, in any of Richardson's works, one of those detached episodes, thrown in like

make-weights, to increase the bulk of the volume, which are so common in other works: such is the story of *The Man of the Hill*, in *Tom Jones*. If his works are laboured into length, at least his prolixity is all bestowed upon the subject, and increases the effect of the story.—Flashes of humour, and transient touches of sensibility, show, indeed, genius; but patient and persevering labour alone can finish a plan, and make every part bear properly upon the main subject.

Sir Charles Grandison, however, lies open,—as what work does not?—to criticism. Besides the double love which has been mentioned, there was another point which perplexed the author much: Sir Charles, as a Christian, was not to fight a duel; yet he was to be recognised as the finished gentleman, and could not be allowed to want that most essential part of the character, the deportment of a man of honour, courage, and spirit. And in order to exhibit his spirit and courage, it was necessary to bring them into action by adventures and rencounters. His first appearance is in the rescue of Miss Byron; a meritorious action, but one which must necessarily expose him to a challenge. How must the author untie this knot? He makes him so very good a swordsman, that he is always capable of disarming his adversary without endangering either of their lives. But are a man's principles to depend on the science of his fencing-master? Every one cannot have the skill of Sir Charles; every one cannot be the *best* swordsman; and the man whose study it is to avoid fighting, is

not quite so likely as another to be the best.—Dr. Young, indeed, complimented the author upon his success in this nice point, in a flourishing epigram, which is thus expressed :

“What hast thou done? I’m ravish’d at the scene;

A sword undrawn makes mighty Cæsars mean.”

But, in fact, it was not undrawn. In the affair with Sir Hargrave, he may be said to have really fought a duel; for, though he refuses the challenge in words, he virtually accepts it, by going into the garden with him, knowing his purpose. In like manner he with Greville retires to a private spot, and there, on his adversary’s drawing, which he might be sure he would do, draws, disarms, and gives him his life. But Greville might not have given him his, nor could every one turn a duel into such harmless play. Can, then, a better expedient be suggested? If not, must we not fairly confess that, in certain cases, the code of the gospel and the code of worldly honour are irreconcilable, and that a man has only to make his choice which he will give up?

Another fault is, a certain stiffness which, it can hardly be denied, is spread over this admirable character. This results partly from the author’s style, which, where it aims to be elegant, wants ease; partly from the manner in which the hero is *proné*, as the French say, by all the other characters, and from the abundance of compliments which are paid on all sides; for certainly Sir Charles is *de la vieille cour*. In part, too, it arises from the very circumstance of his being so perfect and so successful. Perfection of character, joined to distress, will interest; but

prosperous perfection does not greatly engage our sympathy. We are apt to conceive of Sir Charles as having, in reality, no passions; and we do not greatly pity him for the loss of Clementina, when a most amiable lady, who had the other half of his heart, was waiting his acceptance on the other side of the water. We are not quite satisfied with the dutiful resignation with which he gives up corresponding with two amiable and beloved sisters, in compliance with the injunctions of a tyrannical father. We are the less surprised, however, as we recognise in it the high notions entertained by the author of parental authority; but we can give no answer to the question, How came so dutiful a son to enter into a treaty of marriage without consulting his father? except, what perhaps is sufficient, that it would have embarrassed the story.

There is one important particular in which this highly-wrought character does not present an example for imitation, and that is his going so far into a matrimonial treaty with a bigoted catholic; with a woman whose very love for him must expose him to continual distressing importunities to change his religion. Italian servants, an Italian confessor, a stipulated residence half the year out of his native country, and, above all, the giving up half his children (it might happen to be all) to the errors of a faith which he believed to be erroneous—these are among the sacrifices which a conscientious man will scruple, and a wise man will refuse, to make. Horrible must be a union, where the most tender affection can only serve to lacerate the heart, as must be

the case when the object of it is supposed to be under the wrath of God, and doomed to everlasting perdition. This must be the consequence of marrying a bigot to any mode of faith, where the other party is of a different one. Add to this, that the very proposal, made so often by the proud Porretta family to Sir Charles, to change his religion for a wife, and bind himself to live half the year out of his native country, was a high insult to him, considered only as an English gentleman. The author, however, valued himself upon his management of this nice negotiation; and, in a letter to one of his French translators, dexterously brings it forward, as a proof of his candour and liberality towards the catholic religion*.

The author of *Sir Charles* often mentions in his letters, that he was importuned by many of his friends to give them another volume; and the Gottenburg translators sent for the rest of the work, supposing it incomplete: he ought to have received it as a proof that it was too long, and not too short. He had already continued it a whole volume beyond the proper termination—the marriage of his hero; and having done so, he might, without more impropriety, have gone on to the next point of view, and the next, till he had given the history of two or three generations. *Clarissa*, perhaps, runs out into too great a length, but bold were the hand that should attempt to shorten it. *Sir Charles*, on the con-

* It is said, that an Italian translation of the Bible appeared some years since at Naples, in the preface to which the translator warned his readers against English publications; but excepted one, the *Clarissa* of Richardson.

trary, would be improved by merely striking out the last volume, and, indeed, a good part of the sixth, where descriptions of dress, and parade, and furniture, after the interest is completely over, like the gaudy colouring of a western sky, give symptoms of a setting sun. But it is ungrateful to dwell on the faults of genius.

The style of Richardson, which it remains to take notice of, was not in proportion to his other excellencies of composition. He wrote with facility; expressions, as well as thoughts, flowing readily to his pen; but we do not find in his writings, either the ease and elegance of good company, or the polished period of a finished author. They are not only overloaded with a redundance of complimentary expression, which gives a stiffness to the dialogue, particularly in his *Grandison*, where he has most attempted to give a picture of genteel life, but they are blemished with little flippancies of expression, new-coined words, and sentences involved and ill-constructed. If this was considered to be the case when Richardson wrote, it is a still greater impediment to his fame at present, when we are become more fastidious with regard to style, in proportion as good writing is become more common; that degree, I mean, of good writing, which a habit of the pen will always give. The style of Richardson, however, has the property of setting before the reader, in the most lively manner, every circumstance of what he means to describe. He has the accuracy and finish of a Dutch painter, with the fine ideas of an Italian one. He is content to produce effects by the patient labour of minuteness. Had he turned

his thoughts to an observation of rural nature, instead of human manners, he would have been as accurate a describer as Cowper. How circumstantial is the following description of a bird new caught! "Hast thou not observed how, at first, refusing all sustenance, it beats and bruises itself against its wires, till it makes its gay plumage fly about, and overspread its well-secured cage? Now it gets out its head, sticking only at its beautiful shoulders; then, with difficulty, drawing back its head, it gasps for breath, and erectly perched, with meditating eyes, first surveys, and then attempts, its wired canopy. As it gets breath, with renewed rage, it beats and bruises again its pretty head and sides, bites the wires, and pecks at the fingers of its delighted tamer; till, at last, finding its efforts ineffectual, quite tired and breathless, it lays itself down, and pants at the bottom of the cage, seeming to bemoan its cruel fate and forfeited liberty.— And after a few days, its struggles to escape still diminishing, as it finds it to no purpose to attempt it, its new habitation becomes familiar, and it hops about from perch to perch, and every day sings a song to amuse itself, and reward its keeper."

Sir Charles Grandison was published in 1753. The author underwent great vexation while it was printing, from the piracy of the Dublin booksellers, who bribed the servants of Richardson to steal the sheets while they were under the press. They even broke open locks to get at the MSS.; sent over what was prepared for publication; and the booksellers, almost all of whom concurred in this atrocious act of rob-

bery, came out with a cheap edition of several of the volumes before the author's English one.

Besides his three larger works, Richardson published a volume of *Familiar Letters on various Circumstances of Life*, meant as models for servants and others of the lower class, being the scheme he had laid aside for *Pamela*. It is frequently seen in the servants' drawer, and not seldom has found its way into the parlour. The 95th paper of *The Rambler* was also written by him. It describes the progress of a virtuous courtship, and is said to have been the only one which experienced a great demand while publishing in numbers. He assisted in a few works for booksellers.

The latter part of his life was spent in the enjoyment of his well-earned fame, and of a fortune gained by his own industry.—He built an extensive range of warehouses for his business in Salisbury-court, and he had a country house first at North-End, and afterwards at Parson's Green. His manner of living was hospitable, but he was chiefly fond of female society, and was generally surrounded by a coterie of young ladies, many of whom, as Miss Mulso afterwards Mrs. Chapone, Miss Highmore afterwards Mrs. Duncombe, and Miss Talbot, were themselves distinguished in polite literature. In this mental seraglio, as it may be called, he had great facilities for that knowledge of the female heart which he has so eminently shown in his works; but it cannot be denied that it had a tendency to feed that self-importance which was perhaps his reigning foible. Experiencing no contradiction, and seeing no equal, he was constantly fed with adulation

and even his correspondencies with his male friends, such of them at least as have been preserved, (and he was remarkably fond of epistolary correspondence,) turn almost entirely upon his own works, and are full of such exaggerated compliments as must have appeared extraordinary, even when compliments were more in fashion than they are at present. Richardson was twice married; first to his master's daughter, and afterwards to the sister of Mr. Leake, a bookseller at Bath. By both he had a numerous offspring; but four daughters only, by the last, survived him. Richardson had high notions of parental authority, as he has shown in his works; and though, as a good and moral man under the influence of real principle, he fulfilled every essential relative duty, there was a certain formality and stiffness in the family intercourse, more favourable to reverence than to affection. His natural reservedness of manner he himself was sensible of, and lamented. It was probably increased by the nervous disorders, from which he was a great sufferer, and which were brought on by no intemperance, as he observes, but that of study. It is indeed astonishing how a man, who had to raise his fortune by the slow process of his own industry, to take care of an extensive business, and who had a number of connections and relatives, to all of whom he was very kind, could find time, in the breaks and pauses of his other avocations, to write nineteen close-printed volumes, as he often mentions when his correspondents were urging him to enter upon another work. Where there exists strong genius the bent of the mind is imperious, and will be obey-

ed, but the body too often sinks under it. Mrs. Chapone, in her *Ode to Health*, has adverted to Richardson's ill state of health with much feeling in the following apostrophe :

“ Hast thou not left a Richardson unblest ?
He woos thee still in vain, relentless maid,
Though skill'd in sweetest accents to persuade,
And wake soft pity in the savage breast ;
Him Virtue loves, and brightest fame is his ;
Smile thou too, goddess, and complete his bliss.”

Nervous disorders, perhaps unhappily for the sufferers under them, do not often shorten the life they overcloud. This author lived to the age of seventy-two, when he was carried off by a stroke of apoplexy, July the 4th, 1761. He was much lamented by his friends, all of whom had experienced his hospitality and many more substantial benefactions, for he was uniformly liberal and beneficent.—It is a truth which cannot be denied, that the works of Richardson are not found to be so attractive to the present generation as they were to the past ; the young and idle are deterred from reading him by his prolixity, and the defects of his style are become more prominent from the greater attention which has been paid to that part of composition by modern writers. His fame at present stands higher abroad than it does at home. He is as highly valued by foreigners as Rousseau is by us ; and whatever be his defects, his intrinsic merit is too great not to place him above the varying taste of the day. When a hundred novels that are now read are passed away and forgotten, *Clarissa* will hold its place among those standard works that adorn the literature of our country.

DE FOE.

THE first publication which appears in this selection has so little the air of a common novel, that many will probably be surprised to see it included under that denomination ; and some, who consider their old friend *Robinson Crusoe* as a mere school-boy acquaintance, may wonder to see him in such good company as the Sir Charleses and the Lady Betties of fashionable life. But the truth is, this favourite of our early years, though it has no pretensions to the graces of style, nor aims at touching the tender passions, yields to few in the truth of its description and its power of interesting the mind. Its author, DANIEL DE FOE, is a name well known in the political history of his age. He was born in London in 1663 ; his father was a butcher ; his education was a common one, and none of his works bear any marks of that polish and elegance of style which is the mingled result of a classical education, and of associating with the more cultivated orders of society : but he was a man of a truly original genius, and possessed in a remarkable degree the power of giving such an air of truth and nature to his narrations that

they are rather deceptions than imitations. In that particular cast of his genius he resembled Swift, his antipodes in politics and religion. The talent of grave irony, and the attention to those minute circumstances, those apparently undesigned touches, which cause the reader to exclaim, "No man could surely have thought of this if it had not been true," were alike in both. To the *humour* of Swift, De Foe had no pretensions. This author was educated a dissenter, and was greatly attached to the cause of liberty and protestantism : he was early in life engaged in the unfortunate rebellion of the duke of Monmouth, but had the good fortune to escape the severe vengeance which was exercised after his defeat, and to return unmolested to London, where he followed his business of a maker of bricks and pantiles. He was not however successful, and became insolvent ; but he honourably paid his creditors as soon as his circumstances enabled him so to do. From this period he attracted great notice as a writer by a number of publications, chiefly political, which came from his pen. One of them, entitled *The shortest Way with the Dissenters*, drew upon him a severe punishment. It was written in 1702, when the high-church party were inclined to persecute the sectaries. The grave ironical style in which it was written, at first deceived the public, and many thought him in earnest. The same thing is said to have happened to Swift, on the publication of his *Proposal for fattening and eating the Children of the poor Irish*. The house of commons took up the

matter differently, they ordered the book to be burnt by the hangman ; and a prosecution was begun against the publishers. De Foe had secreted himself, but honourably came forward to screen the publishers, and was sentenced to the severe and degrading punishment of the pillory, besides fine and imprisonment. The composure with which he bore his punishment gave occasion to the following sarcasm from Pope, who hated both whigs and dissenters,

“ Earless on high stood unabash’d De Foe.”

While he was still in prison he commenced a periodical publication entitled *The Review*. It was published twice or thrice a week, and besides news, domestic and political, contained the fiction of a club discussing various topics of a miscellaneous nature, which in all probability gave the hint to Steele and Addison for the frame they used afterwards with so much success in the papers of *The Tatler* and *Spectator*. De Foe was liberated by the interposition of Harley, and afterwards employed by the queen in Scotland; when the union was projected. He had great knowledge of affairs of commerce and revenue, on which subjects he was often consulted. After the union had taken place, he wrote the history of it in a folio volume. It seems strange that one so much employed as he was at that time should obtain no settled provision ; and still more, that upon the accession of George the Second, when the whigs were again in power, he was not rewarded for his sufferings in the cause of liberty civil and religious, a cause he certainly

had at heart. But it is to be feared his integrity was not quite equal to his abilities, and he had given offence by some publications which were at least ambiguous, and laid him open to the censure of writing on both sides. He seems therefore from this time to have given up politics, and to have employed his pen in composing those works by which his name has been best known to posterity. Among these were his *Family Instructor* and *Religious Courtship*. They both consist of dialogues on religious and moral subjects, relative to the conduct of life in its various situations and occurrences. They have not the least pretensions to elegance, and an air of religious austerity pervades the whole of them; but their dramatic form of dialogues, supported with much nature and feeling, and the interest which his manner of writing has thrown into the familiar stories and incidents of domestic and common life, has made these publications, especially the former, exceedingly popular to this day among those whose religious opinions are similar to his own. De Foe also wrote *A Journal of the Plague Year*. It is written in the person of a citizen, a shopkeeper, who is supposed to have staid in the metropolis during the whole time of the calamity; and the particulars are so striking, so awful, and so circumstantial, that it deceived most of his readers, and amongst others it is said Dr. Mead, into a belief of its authenticity;—an exercise of ingenuity not to be commended;—though, after all, the particulars were probably most of them true, though the relater was fictitious. De Foe also wrote many

pieces in verse, which, though they had no pretensions to poetry properly so called, had many passages that were nervous and pointed. One, entitled *Reformation of Manners*, contains a strong invective against the slave-trade. A satire called *The true-born Englishman* was much read in its time, though it gave great offence. Its purport was to parry the attacks made against king William as a foreigner, by showing that the English themselves were a very mixed breed, who had no purity of blood to boast of.—But the work by which this writer is best known, both at home and abroad, is that which is presented to the public in this selection, *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*.

It has been translated into most modern languages, has passed through numberless editions, and has always been found particularly agreeable to the taste of youth. The story turns upon the ingenuity and contrivance with which a solitary being, wrecked upon a desert island, provides for his subsistence, and by degrees supplies himself with all the most desirable accommodations of life. The reader is wonderfully delighted to see him acquire one comfort after another, and grows at length almost in love with his solitude. Some have thought the author has shortened his labour too much by allowing him so many articles out of the ship; but without them the story, though it might have displayed more mechanical invention, would have gone on rather heavily. Besides the ingenuity of contrivance displayed in this work, there are many circumstances which strongly

affect the feelings. The terror inspired by the impression of the *foot in the sand*; the luminous eyes, glaring like two lamps, at the bottom of the cave; and the affectionate simplicity of poor Friday, agitate the mind in various ways. The latter has a great deal of simple and natural pathos; and nothing in description can be more lively than the account of his meeting with his old father, who is saved from the cannibals, and of the fond and animated expressions of his affection to him both then, and when he meets him again on the island.

A strong tincture of religious feeling runs through the work, not unmixed with superstition. Dreams, omens, and impressions on the mind occur, in which De Foe was either a believer, or at least he knew how to take advantage of them in impressing his readers. That he was not very scrupulous in this point, appears from the following anecdote:—*Drelincourt on Death*, a grave religious book, not going off so well as the booksellers wished, they applied, it is said, to De Foe to write something which might give it a lift; for which purpose he composed *The Apparition of Mrs. Veal*. Though pure invention, it was told in so natural and circumstantial a way, that it gained credit with hundreds of readers; and being prefixed to the work, the impression sold rapidly.—It is said that *Robinson Crusoe* has given many a boy a predilection for a seafaring life; which is not unlikely; for the variety of adventures it contains kindles curiosity, and even when the subject of them is in his most forlorn and solitary state, there is something gratifying

to the imagination in contemplating him as king and owner of every thing about him ;

“ I am monarch of all I survey,
My right there is none to dispute.”

Among the striking passages of the work may be mentioned the encounter with the wolves and bears in crossing the Pyrenees. The second part, like most second parts, is much inferior to the first. We lose our old acquaintance the Solitary, and are presented with a Missionary in his stead. The story is confused with a variety of adventures, in which however the author exhibits his knowledge of the course of trade, which he was well acquainted with, and manners and customs which he had heard or read of, in China, Tartary, Siberia, and other countries. The most striking passage in this volume is the lively description of the sufferings of a young woman dying in the agonies of hunger. De Foe has shown a candour, at that time not very common, in giving a very amiable character of a French catholic priest ; but the adventure of burning the Tartar idol, if it is meant as a heroic exploit, shows very confused ideas of justice.—It must not be concealed that the originality of this work has been disputed to De Foe from the following circumstance. One Alexander Selkirk really passed some years alone on the island of Juan Fernandez, and a sketch of his story had been given in the relation of Woodes Rogers. This might very probably give the first hint of his romance ; but as to the report that

he possessed papers of Selkirk's and had made unacknowledged use of them, it appears to have been propagated without any solid ground whatever; and indeed the situation in which Robinson Crusoe is placed, and from which most of the incidents arise, materially differs from that of Selkirk.—De Foe wrote many other lives and adventures, and employed his ready pen to the end of his laborious life, which took place in London, in April 1731, in his 68th year.

FIELDING.

HENRY FIELDING, without all doubt the most distinguished novel-writer in the walk of humour, was born in 1707, at Sharpham-park, near Glastonbury, in Somersetshire. His father, Edmund Fielding, was of a noble family; he had served under the Duke of Marlborough, and arrived at the rank of lieutenant-general. His mother was daughter to Sir Henry Gould, one of the judges of the king's bench. Thus advantageously ushered into life, from the situation and connexions of both parents, our author had every reasonable prospect of rising in the world; and, with the parts which nature had given him, of filling a distinguished station in some one of the more honourable professions. Henry was first put under the care of a domestic tutor, the Rev. Mr. Oliver, whose manners at least were not calculated to inspire him with much respect, if we are to believe the tradition, that he afterwards introduced him into his *Joseph Andrews* under the appellation of Parson Trulliber. From the care of this gentleman he was removed to Eton. In this distinguished seminary he became a good classical scholar, both in

the Latin and the Greek languages ; in the latter, particularly, he was said to be an uncommon proficient. He also formed there those acquaintances with young men of rank and fortune, which are generally considered as among the most advantageous circumstances attending a public school. He was early known to Mr. (afterwards Lord) Lyttleton, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, and other distinguished characters.

As young Fielding was intended for the law, he was sent, for the next stage of his education, to Leyden, which university was then in the zenith of its reputation. He studied under the celebrated Vitriarius, then professor of civil law, for two years, and distinguished himself as much by his application, as by the strength of his parts and his love for literature. At that interesting period of his education, his progress was cut short by pecuniary difficulties. His father had married a second time, and the pressure of an increasing family (no less than six sons being born to him in addition to four children of the first bed) rendered it impossible for the general to continue his eldest son's remittances at the university. He was therefore obliged to return to England; and found himself at the age of twenty in the metropolis, pretty much his own master, and exposed to every allurements to pleasure and dissipation.

There is scarcely any profession from which there are so many deserters as from the law. A sprightly young man, who has imbibed in his preliminary education a strong taste for the more elegant parts of literature, is very apt to disrelish

the dry and severe studies to which he is devoted ; and the temptations to pleasure, to which by living so much at large he is peculiarly exposed, and which he has seldom the force to resist, sap the vigour of his mind, and induce him to turn away from a pursuit which requires the unbroken powers of the whole man. Young Fielding was peculiarly susceptible of these impressions : still, had he continued where he had so well begun, at Leyden, in a comparatively sober town, among grave professors, and students occupied in preparing for their future destination, it is probable we might have possessed another eminent barrister or judge, and that we should not have had *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*.—Be that as it may, his coming to London at so critical a period was decisive of his character and fortunes. He had a good person, a quick relish of pleasure, a constitution remarkably strong, and a decided turn for social enjoyment ; so that no doubt his disposition met half way the temptations his situation exposed him to. His allowance from his father was nominally two hundred a year ; which, he was used to say, any body might pay that would. To supply the deficiencies of his income, and support a gay life in London, he began to write for the stage, and in the succeeding ten years produced three-and-twenty dramatic compositions, farces included, a number many times greater than Congreve had given to the public during the course of a long life. The greater part of these pieces met with but indifferent

success at the time, and few of them have stood their ground to the present day.

It has been matter of surprise to those who contemplated Fielding in the quality of a novelist, that an author, whose characteristics are genuine humour and delineation of character, should have succeeded so ill in comedy; for what is a comedy but a short story, or novel put into dialogue? and the more of dialogue there is in the novel, the more spirit it possesses; so that they seem to be very kindred modes of writing.

But it must be considered, in the first place, that a dramatic writer, being confined by time and other circumstances belonging to representation on the stage, is obliged to concentrate his powers, and give the effect by a spirited outline, which the novel-writer has leisure to produce by the slow and patient touches of a more leisurely pencil. Comedy also requires much more delicate management. Coarse incidents and language may pass in relation, which would disgust upon the stage; where, every thing being in action, an indelicacy or awkwardness becomes much more prominent than when it meets the eye of the solitary reader in the pages of a book; and the least circumstance that provokes a laugh at the piece is sufficient to ruin it for ever. A quicker sense of propriety is exercised on the benches of a theatre than at the desk of the reader. In the drama, moreover, the *author* is not allowed to show himself; by which the wit of Fielding would lose much of its poignancy. He does not dramatize his novel so much as

many others have done. The *author's* learning, the *author's* wit appear continually, not only in his digressive chapters, but in the representations of the characters and secret views of his personages; and the humour is continually heightened by the contrast between the author's style and his views of things, and the characters he is holding up to ridicule.

But the want of merit in Fielding's comedies may be ascribed to other causes. They were his first productions; and, like most of the productions of youth, rather drawn from what he had read than what he had seen. He could not be supposed, at the age of twenty, to have attained that knowledge of life and character which he exhibited when, in a maturer age, he wrote his *Tom Jones*. The English stage has few models of elegant comedy, and he seems to have taken his from Congreve and Wycherley, and to have imitated their loose and vicious morals without their humour and brilliancy. Most of his pieces also were written in the intervals of pleasures and dissipation, with great rapidity, and upon the spur of the occasion, that is, the occasion for a present supply of money. He himself entertained a pretty great contempt for the judgement of the town, and hardened himself against censure by despising his censurers. He has printed one of his farces "as it was damned at the theatre royal, Drury Lane." It is related that, when his last comedy *The Wedding Day* was in rehearsal, Garrick, who was to act a part in it, begged the author to strike out a scene in which he

expected to be hissed. Fielding refused: "If there is a weak part, let them find it out," said he. The event was as Garrick had predicted: and when he retired into the Green-room, where the author was drinking champagne, "I told you," said he, "it would never do; they are hissing, and I shall not recover myself all the evening."—"Oh," said Fielding with an oath, "they *have* found-it, have they?"

One of this author's pieces, *The Temple Beau*, exhibits, with some strokes of humour, a character afterwards drawn with such success by Hoadley in his *Suspicious Husband*. His *Tom Thumb* has been often acted, and given great diversion to the audience; but his *Miser*, a free translation from Moliere's *L'Avare*, is the only one of his pieces which at present maintains its ground at the theatre. Yet, though there is nothing in the humour of the character which does not seem very capable of being transferred, it by no means holds the same rank on the English stage which *L'Avare* does on the French.—It is worthy of remark, that the liberties taken with some political characters, in one or two of our author's pieces, are said to have been the immediate occasion of passing the act for limiting the number of theatres, and subjecting dramatic compositions to the inspection of the lord chamberlain. A restraint perhaps necessary, and no doubt permanent.

The farces of Fielding were generally the production of two or three mornings. When he had contracted for a play or farce, he has often been known to go home late from a tavern, and

send a scene or two the next morning written on the papers that had wrapped up his tobacco, of which he was immoderately fond. Notwithstanding the number of his pieces, they do not seem to have been very productive to him in a pecuniary light. For one, which was acted six nights, he received only sixty pounds.

In the midst of this career of dissipation, Fielding fell in love with and married Miss Craddock of Salisbury, a celebrated beauty with a fortune of 1500*l*. About the same time, by his mother's death, he succeeded to an estate of something more than two hundred a year. Upon these events he formed the wise resolution to retire with his wife, whom he passionately loved, into the country, and to forsake the gaieties and vices of a town life. He went accordingly to Stower in Dorsetshire, where his little estate lay. And here he might have purified his mind and corrected his taste. No longer obliged to write for a dinner, he might have felt only the gentle and salutary stimulus of bettering his fortune and increasing his enjoyments by the productions of his pen. But unfortunately he took it into his head to vie in expense with the country gentlemen his neighbours. The sound of a family estate has a wonderful effect upon some men. It was probably an idea of this kind, added to a thoughtlessness now become habitual, that made him launch out in the absurd manner he did. He had a carriage, a large establishment of servants in gaudy liveries; he gave dinners, kept hounds and horses, and found means, in less than three years, entirely to dis-

sipate his little patrimony. Some of these follies he has pourtrayed, softened no doubt, in the character of Booth in his *Amelia*.

He was now again obliged to draw subsistence from his own resources ; and it is some praise to the vigour of his mind, and shows it was able to recover its spring, that he formed the resolution of seriously applying to the law, his original destination. He was about thirty when he entered himself at the Temple, and it is agreed that his application was laudable. He was one of those characters to whom mental exertion is more easy than abstinence from pleasure ; and the good foundation he had laid in early life enabled him to recover a great deal of his lost ground.

After he was called to the bar, he attended the courts and went the circuits, but never had any great flow of business, though he is said to have acquired a very respectable share of legal knowledge, and even to have gone deep into some particular branches of it, as he left behind him two volumes folio upon crown law. The gout also, which he had by this time earned, began to make depredations upon his constitution. He was therefore obliged to recur again to his pen to supply the wants of a growing family ; and essays, plays, and political pamphlets were the product of his leisure. He wrote in a periodical paper called *The Champion*. *An Essay on Conversation* ; *A Journey from this World to the next* ; and many little pieces, now forgotten, to which the time and occasion gave temporary value, were also published by him.

In poetry he was not successful. His attempts exposed him to the satire of Swift in the following lines :

“When you rashly think
No rhymers can like Welsted sink,
His merits balanced, you shall find,
That Fielding leaves him far behind.”

Swift little thought at the time that Fielding would be an author as much read as himself. One little piece of his written in early life is addressed to Sir Robert Walpole, ironically endeavouring to prove himself the greater man of the two. He says ;

“I live above you twice two story,
And from my garret can look down
On the whole street of Arlington.”

And again :

“Your levee is but twice a week ;
From mine I can exclude but one day,
My door is quiet on a Sunday.”

It concludes with expressing himself very willing to come down from his greatness and accept of a place.

About this time he published his *History of Jonathan Wild*. The humour and strokes of character in this piece first gave indications of the mode of writing from whence he was to derive his celebrity. It is, like Gay's *Beggar's Opera*, an exhibition of scenes of the greatest profligacy in low life, with an implied satire on the world in general, and particularly of the world of high life. *Joseph Andrews* was his

first regular novel. It was published in 1742, and gave him deserved celebrity. But he soon after met with a heavy affliction in the loss of his beloved wife, who had long been sinking under ill health. This stroke he felt with an acuteness of sensibility which perhaps would scarcely have been expected in a man of pleasure; his grief was so strong that his friends were even afraid his reason should give way under it. He afterwards, however, married a second time, and his wife survived him.

Attached to the principles of the Revolution, he published, during the rebellion of 1745, a periodical paper entitled *The True Patriot*, and another, *The Jacobite Journal*. These services to government were rewarded with the appointment to the office of acting justice of the peace for Middlesex, a situation he was induced to accept from the failure of his hopes of rising in the more brilliant career of the bar. In this laborious and at that time not very respectable office, he was active and diligent; and he published several tracts with the laudable design of checking the vices of the populace. An active magistrate was extremely wanted at that time. Robberies were frequent, and atrocious murders had been committed with a barbarity not usual in this country. *A Charge to the Grand Jury*, a pamphlet *On the Increase and Cause of Robberies*, and *A Proposal for the Maintenance of the Poor*, in which the first hints were given of county workhouses, bore testimony to his zeal and diligence. He wrote a pamphlet on the case

of Elizabeth Canning, which was answered by Dr. Hill, with whom he had frequent controversies.

It shows the vigour of Fielding's mind, that notwithstanding these exertions, and the duties of an active and laborious profession, with an anxious mind and a broken constitution, he found leisure for his capital work, his *History of Tom Jones*. He was about four-and-forty when he wrote it ; a period of life when judgement, invention, and observation go hand in hand, and man possesses all his powers together. After the publication of this celebrated novel, we may regard the author as in the meridian of his fame, and possessed, through his various labours, of the means of living with ease and comfort : but his constitution, naturally strong, and his frame, originally athletic, undermined by irregularity and broken by fatigue, were now sinking apace ; notwithstanding which he published, four years afterwards, his *Amelia*, in which, though it possesses many beautiful strokes, and an interest derived from its including a part of Mr. Fielding's own story, the humour is fainter, the characters less original ; and, like the second rainbow, though the same colours are seen, they shine with fainter radiance. It has more of sentiment than humour, more of narrative than of scenes passing before the eye.

After this he engaged in a periodical paper, *The Covent-Garden Journal*, which was carried on for a twelvemonth. But now his health became entirely broken under a complication of disorders ; and after undergoing the operation of

tapping, he was ordered to Lisbon, whither his wife accompanied him; but he lived only two months after he got there. The last gleams of his genius were displayed in a small piece entitled *A Journey to Lisbon*, in which there is more of peevishness than of humour. He died in 1754, in the forty-eighth year of his age. His second wife with four children survived him, and experienced the kindness of Mr. Allen, the Alworthy of the author, in the liberal pecuniary assistance he afforded for their education. Fielding was succeeded in his office by his half-brother, the well-known Sir John Fielding, who had been long his assistant, and who afterwards distinguished himself so much by his activity at the head of the London police, though he had the misfortune to be blind from his birth.

Henry Fielding was in his person tall, and of a robust make with an originally strong constitution, qualities which, perhaps for that reason, he seems fond of attributing to his heroes. He was social, hospitable, fond of pleasure, and apt to be impatient under disappointment or ill usage. Though he might not be a very faithful, he was a very affectionate husband, as well as a very fond father; all the sympathies of a feeling heart were alive in him. By seeing much of the vicious part of mankind, professionally in his latter years and by choice in his earlier, his mind received a taint which spread itself in his works, but was powerfully counteracted by the better sensibilities of his nature. Notwithstanding his irregularities, he was not without a sense of religion, and had collected materials for an An-

swer to Lord Bolingbroke's posthumous works, in which he would probably have been much out of his depth. No portrait was taken of him during his life. Hogarth, with whom he had an intimate friendship, executed one after his death, partly from recollection and partly from a profile cut by a lady with a pair of scissars. An engraving of it is prefixed to the edition of his works in ten volumes, with his Life, published by Mr. Murphy.

JOSEPH ANDREWS, the first of Fielding's novels in the order of publication, has been, and always must be, a most captivating performance to those who have a taste for genuine humour. There is little or nothing in it of story, compared with the elaborate plan of his subsequent work ; nor so great a variety of characters : on which account the performance is inferior, but it possesses, in quite an equal degree, the comic spirit of the author. He professes to have written it in the manner of Cervantes ; and accordingly the style, where the author himself speaks, is in a kind of mock heroic, particularly in the introductory flourishes, where he ushers in the incidents of a foot-race, or a boxing-match between two rustics, in the pompous and lofty phrase which might be used to describe one of Homer's battles. This manner he has preserved in his other novels : in all of them the *author* is constantly kept in sight, and the grave humour of the piece is heightened by *his* remarks. The plan of Richardson, on the contrary, which was to make his characters tell their own story in letters to each other, necessarily excludes the

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author :—each mode has its advantages, that of Richardson is perhaps the most difficult. The most striking figure in this piece is that of Parson Adams, an original and most diverting character, in which the lights and shades are so admirably blended, and estimable qualities so mixed with foibles and eccentricities, that we love and laugh at him at the same time.

Adams is a country curate of great learning and integrity, very benevolent, and of such simplicity of heart that, to use the author's expression, "he never sees further into men than they choose to let him." In common with many deep scholars, he is subject to great absence of mind, which brings him into many ludicrous difficulties ; and he has a tincture of harmless vanity which leads him sometimes to assume more self-importance than belongs to his humble station.

The author has shown great skill in making us laugh so heartily at a character, and yet keeping it above contempt. This could not have been done in the degrading scenes of low life to which he is exposed, if he had not, in addition to his higher qualities, given him great personal courage and an athletic constitution ; so that in the scenes in which his poverty exposes him to insult, his Herculean strength and intrepidity make us feel that, though he may be played upon, he is not to be trampled on ; and the reader is well pleased to see that he generally gets the better in the rough contests in which he is engaged. It has been sometimes objected to Fielding that so good a man as Adams, a clergyman, and a scholar, should be held up to ridicule ; but

it should be considered that comic characters were what he sought, and what his genius led him to exhibit; that such mixed characters do exist, and that our feelings are properly excited in due proportion to the excellencies and eccentricities of this amusing personage. His learning redeems his ignorance of the world; his simplicity does not proceed from want of sense, but want of penetration, which arises in great measure from his candour and singleness of heart: his absence of mind harmonizes with his erudition. A man of his stamp is not unlikely to forget his horse at an inn, to wade through a brook instead of crossing a stile to find a dry path, and to leave the sermons behind him which he came to London to print. It is asserted in Fielding's Life by Murphy, that a Mr. Young, a man of great learning and a friend of the author's, was the original of this picture. This gentleman was a man of great benevolence, an excellent Grecian, and particularly fond of Æschylus, and very subject to fits of absence. It is related of him that, while he was chaplain to a regiment in Flanders, he took a solitary ramble one fine summer's evening, and, falling into a deep reverie, walked on till he came to the enemy's camp, where he was with difficulty brought to his recollection by the *Qui va là ?* The officer on duty, seeing he had strayed thither in the simplicity of his heart, politely gave him leave to pursue his meditations back again.

Two other characters of clergymen appear in this work, those of Barnabas and Trulliber. Trulliber feeding his hogs and tyrannizing over his

wife is a truly Dutch piece, and worthy the pencil of a Teniers. It is possible a Trulliber might be found in a remote part of the country when the author wrote, but it is to be presumed the race is now extinct. Barnabas is a character of hypocrisy and selfishness, of which the world will always afford specimens. Joseph and Fanny are sufficiently interesting: the latter is drawn with ease and simplicity. Joseph is a hero in virtue, more so perhaps than might naturally have been expected from the free pen of the author, who seems to have been induced to give him this purity of character from a whimsical competition with the author of *Pamela*, against which work there are many sly strokes of satire. It is certain, however, that *Joseph Andrews* is the most unexceptionable in point of morals of any of Fielding's novels. So far as a free exhibition of vicious characters may be objected to on the score of delicacy, perhaps it is not free from blame, but in this it is far less exceptionable than those of Smollet; and there is between them this essential difference, that in *Joseph Andrews* the interest is constantly and uniformly thrown on the side of virtue. When our affections are drawn forth, it is in favour of the innocent and the good; when we laugh, it is at folly, affectation, or absurdity; when we feel detestation, it is at hardness of heart, as in the behaviour of the passengers in the stage-coach to the wounded Joseph; or it is at brutality, hypocrisy, and deceit; so that, if Fielding had written only this work, there could have been no doubt of his being ranked among the friends of virtue.

In this panegyric must not however be included a very dull history of a Mr. Wilson, inserted apparently, as well as another story of Leonora, for the sake of filling up, though the work only consists of two volumes. The story has the worse effect, as, after having passed through every scene of vice and debauchery, Wilson is rewarded with a virtuous wife : and by way of connecting this episodical story with the body of the work, the author has made him the father of the virtuous and deserving Joseph.

A number of other characters are touched with great truth and spirit. Mrs. Slipslop has become proverbial for her phraseology, which has been imitated by several novel-writers. Lady Booby is the prototype of Lady Bellaston. The discerning reader cannot overlook Peter Pounce the steward, nor the simplicity of Adams, who believes him in earnest when he pretends “ not to be near so rich as people thought him,” and the *naïveté* with which the latter tells him, “ that he always said it was impossible he could have honestly amassed so much, particularly as he inherited no fortune,” with the consequent anger of Pounce, all which conveys a satire as just as it is lively. We are never better pleased than when, either in fiction or in real life, a proud man receives a stroke of unintentional satire from one who has too much simplicity to feel that he has given it. But to particularize the strokes of nature and humour in this novel would be almost to transcribe the work ; suffice it to mention one or two.

When Joseph, having rescued his Fanny from

the hands of her ravisher, expresses his impatience to have her made indissolubly his own; Adams rebukes him for his impetuosity, telling him that "the passions are to be greatly subdued if not totally eradicated, and that he ought not so to set his mind upon any person or thing in this world, as that he cannot resign it quietly and contentedly, when taken from him in any manner by divine Providence." At this moment somebody comes in and tells him that his youngest son is drowned; and when Joseph attempts to comfort him from some of the topics he had just insisted on, the good man rejects them in the bitterness of his heart, and cries out, "Child, child, do not attempt impossibilities, the loss of a child is one of those great trials in which our grief is allowed to be immoderate." Yet the exhortations of Adams are not common-place and hypocritical, like those of Barnabas when he prayed by Joseph; his inconsistency is only the weakness of human nature. The passage finely shows how difficult it is to put ourselves in the place of others. It was impossible for Adams, with all his benevolence, to enter into the impatient feelings of the young lovers. He was ready to serve, but he could not sympathize with them. A younger man would have sympathized, and, if he wanted benevolence, might not have served them.

The winding up of this novel is the only part in which there is any aim at intricacy; and it may perhaps be thought some disparagement to the invention of the author, that the plot of two of his novels turns upon the discovery of foundling

children. As *Joseph Andrews* is made the brother of Pamela Andrews, and as both are stories in low life, Richardson complained heavily of Fielding that he had followed up the mode of writing which he had opened for him, and made it a vehicle for abusing him; for, in fact, a good deal of ridicule is thrown upon *Pamela*, and of *that* its author might complain. But his manner and that of Fielding are so totally different, that each may be admired as an original writer without interference with the other, and different tastes will be attracted by different talents. *Joseph Andrews* may with more propriety be compared to the *Paysan Parvenu* of Marivaux than to any work of Richardson's.

Joseph Andrews was followed by *Tom Jones*, a novel produced when the author was in the meridian of his faculties, and after he had joined to his natural talents experience of the world, mature judgement, and practice in the art of writing. From these advantages a finished work may be expected; and such, considered as a composition, *Tom Jones* undoubtedly is. There is perhaps no novel in the English language so artfully conducted, or so rich in humour and character. Nor is it without scenes that interest the heart. The story of the highwayman, the distress of Mrs. Miller and her daughter in the affair with Nightingale, and many little incidents relating to Jones in his childhood, are highly affecting, and calculated to awaken our best feelings. Touches of the pathetic thus starting out in a work of humour, do not lose, they rather

gain, from the contrast of sensations, and have a greater air of nature from being mixed with adventures drawn from common life. The conduct of the piece is as masterly as the details are interesting. It contains a story involving a number of adventures, and a variety of characters, all of which are strictly connected with the main design, and tend to the development of the plot; which yet is so artfully concealed, that it may be doubted whether it was ever anticipated by the most practised and suspicious reader. The story contains all that we require in a regular epopea or drama; strict unity of design, a change of fortune, a discovery, punishment and reward distributed according to poetical or rather moral justice. The clearing up the character of Jones to Alworthy, the discovery of his relationship to him, and his union with Sophia, are all brought about at the end of the piece, and all obscurities satisfactorily cleared up; so that the reader can never doubt, as in some novels he may, whether the work should have ended a volume before, or have been carried on a volume after, the author's conclusion. The peculiar beauty of the plot consists in this; that though the author's secret is impenetrable, the discovery is artfully prepared by a number of circumstances, not attended to at the time, and by obscure hints thrown out, which, when the reader looks back upon them, are found to agree exactly with the concealed event. Of this nature is the cool unabashed behaviour of Jenny, the supposed delinquent, when she acknow-

ledges herself the mother of the child ; the flitting appearance from time to time of the attorney Dowling ; and especially the behaviour of Mrs. Blifil to her son, which is wonderfully well managed in this respect. She appears at first to notice him only in compliance, and an ungracious compliance too, with her brother's request ; yet many touches of the mother are recollected when the secret is known ; and the more open affection she shows him afterwards, when a youth of eighteen, has a turn given it which effectually misleads the reader. If he is very sagacious, he may perhaps suspect some mystery from the frequent appearance of Dowling ; but he has no clue to find out what the mystery is, nor can he anticipate the very moment of discovery.

But intricacy of plot, admirable as this is, is still of secondary merit compared with the exhibition of character, of which there is in this work a rich variety. Of the humorous ones Squire Western and his sister are the most prominent. They are admirably contrasted. He, rough, blunt, and boorish ; a country squire of the last century ; fond of his dogs and horses ; a bitter Jacobite, as almost all the country squires at that time were ; and from both causes averse to lords, and London, and every circumstance belonging to a court. She, a staunch whig, a politician in petticoats, valuing herself upon court breeding, finesse, and management, and not disposed, as Young says in one of his satires, " to take her tea without a stratagem." Their opposite though both wrong modes of managing Sophia,

their mutual quarrels, and the cordial contempt shown for female pretensions on the one side, and country ignorance on the other, are highly amusing. The character of Western is particularly well drawn: he is quite a worldly man, and strongly attached to money, notwithstanding an appearance of jollity and heartiness, which might seem to indicate a propensity to the social feelings. His extreme fondness for Jones, and his total blindness to the passion between him and his daughter, though he had thrown them continually in each other's way, are very natural, and what we see every day exemplified in real life, as well as the astonishment he expresses that a young lady of fortune should think of falling in love with a young fellow without any. Many parents seem by their conduct to think this as impossible as if the two parties were beings of a different species, and they deservedly suffer the consequences of their incautious folly. His fondness for Sophia too, like that of many parents, is very consistent with the most tyrannical behaviour to her in points essential to her happiness. His leaving the pursuit of his daughter when he hears the cry of the hounds, in order to join a fox-chase, is very characteristic and diverting.

It must be admitted that the language and manners of Western have a coarseness which in the present day may be thought exaggerated; and it is to be hoped it would be difficult now to find a breed of country squires quite so unpolished. Perhaps the improvement may be partly owing to their not being so independent

as formerly. When they lived insulated, each in his own little domain, and their estates sufficed them to reside among their tenants and dependants in rustic consequence, they supplied such characters as a Western, a Sir Francis Wronghead, the Jacobite esquire in *The Freeholder*; and, of the more amiable sort, a Sir Roger de Coverley; for the drama and the novel; which are now nearly extinct, from the necessity the increasing demands of luxury have occasioned of seeking an increase of fortune in the busy and active scenes of life. Estates are purchased by moneyed men; they bring down the habits of mercantile life from the brewery or the warehouse; a library and a drawing-room take the place of the hall hung with stags' horns and brushes of foxes; the hounds are sold; the mansion is deserted during half the year for London or a watering-place. It is probable there are more of his majesty's subjects at this moment hunting the tiger or the wild boar in India, than there are hunting foxes at home.

Partridge is the Sancho Pancha of the piece; like him, he deals in proverbs and scraps of wisdom; like him, he is cowardly, and puts his master in mind of bodily necessities. The author has taken occasion through this character to pay a delicate compliment to the acting of Garrick in the part of Hamlet. Jones himself, the hero of the piece, for whom, notwithstanding his faults, the reader cannot help being interested, is contrasted with Blifil, the legitimate son of his mother. The two youths are brought up together under the same roof and the same

discipline. Jones is a youth of true feeling, honour, and generosity; open and affectionate in his disposition, but very accessible to the temptations of pleasure. Blifil, with great apparent sobriety and decorum of manners, is a mean selfish hypocrite, possessing a mind of thorough baseness and depravity. In characters so contrasted, it is not doubtful to which of them the reader will, or ought to give the preference. To the faults of Blifil the reader has no inclination to be partial. They revolt the mind, particularly the minds of youth. The case is not the same with those more pardonable deviations from morals which are incident to youths of a warm temperament and an impressible heart: these are contagious in their very nature, and therefore the objections which have been made to the moral tendency of this novel are no doubt in some measure just. It is said to have been forbidden in France on its first publication. The faults of Jones are less than those of almost every other person who is brought upon the stage; yet they are of more dangerous example, because they are mixed with so many qualities which excite our affections. Still, his character is of a totally different stamp from the heroes of Smollet's novels. He has an excellent heart and a refined sensibility, though he has also passions of a lower order. In every instance where he transgresses the rules of virtue, he is the seduced, and not the seducer; his youth, his constitution, his unprotected situation after he left Alworthy's, palliate his faults, and in honourable love he is tender and constant. His refusal

of the young widow who makes him an offer of her hand does him honour. In one instance only is he *degraded*,—his affair with Lady Belaston.

The character of Sophia was probably formed according to the author's ideas of female perfection: she is very beautiful, very sweet-tempered, very fond and constant to her lover; but her behaviour will scarcely satisfy one who has conceived high ideas of the delicacy of the female character. A young woman just come from reading *Clarissa* must be strangely shocked at seeing the heroine of the tale riding about the country on post-horses after her lover; and the incidents at Upton are highly indelicate. It is observable that Fielding uniformly keeps down the characters of his women, as much as Richardson elevates his. A yielding easiness of disposition is what he seems to lay the greatest stress upon. Alworthy is made to tell Sophia, that what had chiefly charmed him in her behaviour was the great deference he had observed in her for the opinions of men. Yet Sophia, methinks, had not been extraordinarily well situated for imbibing such reverence. Any portion of learning in women is constantly united in this author with something disagreeable. It is given to Jenny, the supposed mother of Jones. It is given in a higher degree to that very disgusting character Mrs. Bennet in *Amelia*; Mrs. Western, too, is a woman of reading. A man of licentious manners, and such was Fielding, seldom respects the sex. Of the other characters,

Lady Bellaston displays the ease, good-breeding, and impudence of a town-bred lady of fashion, who has laid aside her virtue. The scene where Jones meets Sophia at her house unexpectedly, the confusion of the lovers, and the civil, sly teasings of Lady Bellaston, are very diverting. Mrs. Miller is a specimen of a natural character given without any exaggeration. She is warm-hearted, overflowing with gratitude, sanguine, and very loquacious. The behaviour of Jones in the affair between Nightingale and her daughter does him honour, and he manages the uncle and the father with much finesse. All the characters concerned are well drawn. The family of Black George exhibits natural but coarse painting; they would not be undeserving of a place in Mr. Crabb's parish register. The character of Alworthy is not a shining one; he is imposed upon by every body: this may be consistent with goodness, but it is not consistent with that dignity in which an eminently virtuous character, meant to be exhibited as a pattern of excellence, ought to appear. But Fielding could not draw such a character. Traits of humanity and kindness he is able to give in all their beauty; but a religious and strictly moral character was probably connected in his mind with a want of sagacity, which those who have been conversant with the vicious part of the world are very apt to imagine must be the consequence of keeping aloof from it. Besides, it was necessary for the plot that Alworthy should be imposed upon. The character of Alworthy,

it is said, was meant for Mr. Allen of Prior-park, a friend and patron of the author's, characterized by Pope in these well known lines,

“ Let humble Allen, with an awkward shame,
Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame.”

The discovery of Jones's birth, and his restoration to the favour of Alworthy, wind up the whole, and give an animation to the concluding part, which is apt to become flat in the works of common authors. It is some drawback, however, upon the satisfaction of the reader, that poetic justice cannot be done without giving the good Alworthy the pain of being acquainted with the shame of his sister. It is not natural, when he does know it, that he should needlessly publish a circumstance of that kind, or consider Jones as having the same claims upon him as a legitimate child of his sister's; yet this is what he is made to do.

Upon the whole, *Tom Jones* is certainly for humour, wit, character, and plot, one of the most entertaining and perfect novels we possess. With regard to its moral tendency we must content ourselves with more qualified praise. A young man may imbibe from it sentiments of humanity, generosity, and all the more amiable virtues; a detestation of meanness, hypocrisy, and treachery: but he is not likely to gain from it firmness to resist temptation, or to have his ideas of moral purity heightened or refined by the perusal. More men would be apt to imitate Jones than would copy Lovelace; and it is to be feared there are few women who would not like

him better than Sir Charles Grandison. The greater refinement also and delicacy of the present age, a sure test of national civilization, though a very equivocal one of national virtue, has almost proscribed much of that broad humour which appears in the works of Fielding's times, and we should scarcely bear, in a new novel, the indelicate pictures which are occasionally presented to the imagination. The scenes at inns also are coarse, and too often repeated. The introductory chapters ought not to be passed over; they have much wit and grave Cervantic humour, and occasionally display the author's familiarity with the classics.

Fielding's vein was not yet exhausted; he produced a third novel called *Amelia*. If this has less of the author's characteristic humour, it has more scenes of domestic tenderness. Contrary to the usual practice of novel-writers, the story begins after the marriage of the principal personages. The hero, Mr. Booth, is introduced to us in a prison; the distresses of the piece arise from the vicious indulgencies of the husband, combined with unfortunate circumstances; and in the character of Booth, Fielding is generally supposed to have delineated his own. Amelia is such a wife as most men of that stamp would deem the model of female perfection, such a one as a man, conscious of a good many frailties and vices, usually wishes for. Faithful, fond, and indulgent, the prospect of immediate ruin cannot draw from her one murmur against her husband, and she willingly sacrifices to him her jewels and every article in her possession.

Booth is represented as good-natured, thoughtless, and extravagant; passionately fond of his wife, notwithstanding occasional breaches of fidelity to her; and very ready to receive the sacrifices she makes, even to the pawning of her clothes and moveables, for the discharge of his gaming debts. Amelia, indeed, is a heroine of affection and obedience, and the impression upon the reader is certainly that of her being a very amiable and interesting woman; but her character exhibits a great degree of weakness, particularly in her behaviour to the nobleman who is endeavouring to seduce her. What woman of any sense could suppose, that a gay nobleman would frequent her house for the sake of amusing himself with her little ones? Her softness and tenderness form a happy contrast with the boldness and daring guilt of Miss Matthews, a character conceived with great strength and spirit. She is a woman handsome and genteelly educated, but leading a life of profligacy, given up to her passions, dangerous; not frail only but wicked. She keeps Booth in unwilling bondage by her threats of disclosing his infidelity to his wife. The history she is made to give of herself is, however, a very dull one.

The prison scenes are strongly drawn. Fielding was well acquainted with rogues and rascals in his judicial, and probably not unfrequently in his private capacity. There is much merit in the delineation of Captain James and his wife, a fashionable couple who are very complaisant without caring for each other. It is an excellent stroke in the character of the lady, that, in the

midst of her anxiety for her husband, who is supposed to be killed in a duel, she *recollects* to countermand a rich brocade making up for her at the mantua-maker's. In touches of satire like these Fielding excelled. There is something very touching in the humble love of Atkins, which is only revealed when he thinks himself on his death-bed ; but the author has not used him very kindly in matching him with so disagreeable a personage as Mrs. Bennet, whose character throughout is thoroughly disgusting, and seems introduced purely to show the author's dislike to learned women. Learning in women may be inimical to some parts of the feminine character, but certainly does not lead to the vices he has given Mrs. Bennet. Probably the coterie of literary and accomplished ladies that generally assembled at his rival's house had its share in fostering this aversion.

Another character in this work is Colonel Bath, who hides great tenderness of heart under an appearance of fierceness and bluster. He warms his sister's gruel, and is ready to run any man through the body who catches him at the employment. His portrait approaches the caricature.

A more important personage in the story is the good Dr. Harris ; a clergyman, active, friendly and benevolent, with a dash of the humourist. By his means the discovery is brought about that Amelia is entitled to a large estate, which extricates Booth from his difficulties, and brings the story to a happy conclusion. Though Fielding in his former works has introduced

many clergymen who are held up to ridicule, it is not as clerical but as individual characters, for he was no enemy either to the church or to religion. We certainly cannot conceive of him as a religious man ; but he was not from system irreligious. In his characters of Thwackum and Square he has given pretty equal measure to the divine and the philosopher.—There are many good moral maxims in *Amelia*, and much of grave dissertation, but less of humour than in the author's former works. There are also many tender touches of conjugal affection and domestic feeling. There is no great merit, it is true, on Booth's side in receiving graciously the endearments of a beautiful woman who is always in good humour with him, even when he is most faulty. He is pleased with her ; he could not well be otherwise ; but he denies himself nothing for her sake or his children's. Yet, faulty as he is, the reader is glad when he is extricated from his distresses. That this should be done by the discovery of a forged will, betrays some poverty of invention, as nearly the same incident is made use of in the *denouement* of *Tom Jones*.

Upon the whole, though *Amelia* must be acknowledged inferior to the author's other two works, it would establish the reputation of a common writer ; and the three together present an exhibition of wit, humour, and character, not easy to be paralleled before or since the time when they were published.

Fielding's works are not greatly relished by foreigners ; his personages are so truly and characteristically English, that it requires the know-

ledge and early associations of a native fully to comprehend them. A Somersetshire esquire is a being as unknown to a Frenchman as a Limosin gentleman is to us. Humour, like some fruits of delicate taste, should be enjoyed on the spot where it is produced. It loses its flavour by being carried abroad. Indeed a foreigner often forms wrong ideas of the manners of a country when he takes them from works of wit and humour, where peculiarities are necessarily dwelt upon and exaggerated ; and an Englishman, solicitous for the honour of his country, would not wish that the ideas of its manners should be taken from the works of Fielding. To himself they are valuable in the same light as the paintings of Hogarth, which are become curious from exhibiting the modes and dresses of the last century, along with the characteristic manners of the country, and the varied play of those passions and feelings, to delineate which, with spirit and effect, belongs to the observer of human nature in general.

GOLDSMITH.

ONE of the most pleasing novels of a modern cast is *The Vicar of Wakefield*. Its author, OLIVER GOLDSMITH, was born in the year 1731, at Pallas in the county of Longford in Ireland, according to his epitaph in Westminster Abbey; but another account mentions Elphin as his birth-place. His character was eccentric; his pursuits were desultory. His father, who was a clergyman, gave him a classical education, and sent him from school to Dublin college. Like Swift, he is said to have exhibited no peculiar marks of quickness in this period of his life, and he did not take his bachelor's degree till two years after the usual time.

As he was intended for the study of physic, he removed to the university of Edinburgh in 1751, where he staid three years; but he seems not to have brought with him to this seminary much steadiness of application or ardour for professional studies, and he was obliged to quit it clandestinely on account of a debt he had contracted;—it is said, for a fellow-student, but probably the consequence of that mutual accommodation which often subsists between young

and thoughtless companions. He was pursued, and arrested at Sunderland; but was released through the friendship of two fellow-students. The world was now all before him; and he therefore resolved to see it, and accordingly embarked immediately for Holland; and poor as he was, and struggling with difficulties of every kind, performed a tour, mostly on foot, through that country, Flanders, and part of Germany. He passed some time at the universities of Paris and Louvain, and took a bachelor's degree of physic at the latter of these seminaries. He thence accompanied an English gentleman to Geneva, and was there recommended as a travelling tutor to a man of fortune.

An eccentric genius is but ill calculated for a guide: our author scarcely possessed one qualification for the office, natural taste excepted; and probably the youth, who had just succeeded to a large fortune, was as impatient of being guided, as his tutor was unused to guide. Be that as it may, their connexion was soon dissolved by a disagreement, and poor Goldsmith was left alone in the south of France, friendless and destitute in a foreign country, to find his way home, or pursue his tour as he could. Uncomfortable as many circumstances in this excursion must have been, it was here that the young poet laid in those images which afterwards produced his beautiful poem of *The Traveller*, great part of which was written in the countries which he describes; and, though no doubt a melancholy thought would sometimes intrude, as he found himself,

“Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow,”

wandering on foot by the banks of the Scheldt or the Po, his mode of travelling was incontestably more favourable to reflection, and gave more opportunity to the ideas to sink leisurely into his mind, than if he had been borne along through half Europe by the rattling wheels of a postchaise.

As a literary man, he was received by the convents with that hospitality which they so laudably practised; and he tells his readers no more than the literal truth, when, in his *Traveller*, he represents himself as leading "with tuneless pipe the sportive choir" of the French peasants; for to the little knowledge which he had of the German flute he was often obliged for a lodging and a dinner.

When Goldsmith returned to England, a few pence in his pocket were the whole of his finances; he knew no one, and had no recommendations; and in this manner was he launched upon the great metropolis, with his pressing wants, and only his talents to provide for them. Without introduction, and of no promising appearance as to externals, he offered himself as journeyman to several apothecaries without success, and was at length obliged to accept of employment in the laboratory of a chemist near Fish-Street-Hill.

It was not long before he found out one of his old college friends, the same who had assisted in liberating him from the arrest, who, though he with difficulty recognised him through the forlorn appearance he made, generously shared his purse with him while he staid in London.

Goldsmith did not remain long in a situation so little adapted to his education and talents : he was recommended by the chemist as assistant to Dr. Milner, who kept an academy at Peckham. The office of usher in a school has been the resource, at one time or other of their lives, of a great portion of men eminent for literature ; but it cannot be said that their gratitude has led them to any partiality for that mode of life ; as, on the contrary, they have generally taken care to show the disgust they had conceived against the employment, by painting in pretty strong colours, as Goldsmith has done in his *Vicar of Wakefield*, the disagreeable circumstances attending it.

He soon quitted this situation ; and having become acquainted with the booksellers, and being employed by them, he took lodgings in London, and became author by profession. He was at first employed in the *Monthly Review*, and in a set of essays for a newspaper, which were afterwards collected in his works under the title of *The Citizen of the World*. He also published a weekly paper called *The Bee*, and other pieces. But he was still amongst the drudges of literature, working in obscurity, and his name was unknown to the public, till he suddenly emerged into light by the publication of his *Traveller*, in 1765, which at once lifted him to an eminent station amongst the English poets. Both the character and scenery of different countries are touched in this poem with a rapid but masterly hand. Those of Holland and Switzerland are particularly striking. The moral and

political reflections that are introduced seem rather suggested by the necessity of finding a cement to bind the separate parts together, than by any spirit of philosophical research. The charming descriptions dwell upon the mind, but the moral is forgotten; or, if remembered, it is only to awaken the mind to the fallacy of the maxim, that *every form of civil society is equal in its influence on human happiness.*

Goldsmith at this period seems to have had thoughts of practising as a physician. He dressed in the professional costume then in use, assumed airs of dignity, and left off those places of vulgar resort where he used to laugh and amuse himself. He went on, however, with his literary schemes; and in the next year *The Vicar of Wakefield* made its appearance. This delightful little novel had indeed been written some time before, and by the intervention of Dr. Johnson sold for sixty pounds, which went to discharge the author's rent. But booksellers are not always judges of their own goods, and the manuscript was kept back through diffidence of its success, till the author had acquired a name by his poem. Thus he had the ill-luck to dispose of both works as the first productions of an unknown author.

His fame as a writer was now established, and from this time he was employed in a variety of works, from which he drew a very comfortable subsistence. The furniture of his mind was various, but his knowledge was superficial. Taste supplied in him the deficiencies of science: his style was easy and flowing, and every thing

he wrote, whether in verse or prose, bore the impression of his talent. Even to those publications which he compiled for booksellers, he communicated something of the charm of his own genius ; and Dr. Johnson said of him with equal felicity and truth, “ Nullum fere scribendi genus non tetigit, nullum quod tetigit non ornavit.”

Goldsmith now took rooms in the Temple, and, along with a friend, a country-house on the Edgeware road. Here he wrote his *History of England, in Letters from a Nobleman to his Son*. These were long attributed to Lord Lyttleton. Probably the booksellers were in no haste to undeceive the public. It is still in great credit as an introductory book for youth. He also produced, at different times, a *Roman History*, a *History of Greece*, and a *Life of Bolingbroke*, and of *Parnell*, prefixed to editions of their works.

In 1768 he tried a new walk, and ventured upon the stage with his comedy of *The Good-natured Man*, but without much success, though it possessed a good share of comic merit and originality. The public taste was at that time very much for sentimental comedy—*la comédie larmoyante*,—and *False Delicacy*, a play of Kelly's, was acted with great applause at the other house. It is said that poor Goldsmith could never forgive Kelly his success. He however made 500*l.* by the piece ; and if he had lost any popularity by it, it was amply regained by his *Deserted Village*, which he published in 1770, and of which he seems hardly to have been sen-

sible of the merit ; for he refused at first to take the hundred pounds which the bookseller offered for it, saying, it was five shillings a couplet—more than the sale of a poem could ever repay. It may be thought, perhaps, that authors and booksellers understand one another better at this period.

There is scarcely any poem in the English language, in which harmony, beautiful description, and pathos are united with greater effect than in this piece. The plan of it is an expansion of the concluding lines of *The Traveller*, and displays the same prejudice, if it be a prejudice, against commercial opulence. Many inquiries were made at the time, where the village of “sweet Auburn” had been situated. It is to be found in the county of Roscommon : its population or depopulation existed probably only in the poet’s fancy, as it does not appear that he ever visited Ireland after he had left it, but the images cannot be contemplated without the most lively emotion. The character of the good pastor does not suffer by a comparison with Dryden’s. It was probably meant for his brother, whom he describes in his address to him as “having retired to happiness and obscurity on an income of 40*l.* a year ;” and for whom he seems to have entertained an ardent affection and esteem. The schoolmaster, and the village alehouse, are streaked with that humour which characterizes his *Vicar of Wakefield*. It is difficult to say which of his two poems has most poetical merit : but this was certainly the most popular. It interested the feelings. The four

last lines, as well as the ten concluding ones of *The Traveller*, were given him by Dr. Johnson.

Two years after this he hazarded another attempt to make the public laugh, and this time succeeded. His comedy *She Stoops to Conquer* is full of absurdities, and the humour of it hardly rises above farce. His friends had great apprehensions for its fate. Mr. Cumberland, in his *Memoirs*, gives a very entertaining account of the manœuvres practised by his friends, by posting people in different parts of the house to laugh and clap at the appointed places, in order to secure its success. The author himself came into the house when they were beginning a hiss at some passage. "What noise is that?" said he, in much alarm. "Oh doctor," said Colman, "do not be afraid of squibs, when we have been sitting these two hours upon a barrel of gunpowder." He did not forgive this sally.

The last work Goldsmith was employed in was his *History of the Earth and animated Nature*. He was but little of a naturalist, but he was a fine writer; and with the help of Buffon and other authors he produced a work popular and pleasing in a high degree, though charged with errors by more scientific writers.

The literary fame of Goldsmith was now established, and the profits of his labours were such as ought to have made his circumstances perfectly easy: but he was a man of no regularity or worldly prudence, and, besides a propensity to show and expense, he had contracted an unfortunate habit of gaming, which involved him in pecuniary distress: his constitution too began to

give way, and he fell into a state of dejection, in which he expressed almost a weariness of life. In this state he was seized with a fever, which, assisted by a large dose of medicine which he took contrary to the advice of his physician, carried him off in March, 1774, at the early age of five-and-forty. A monument was erected for him in Westminster Abbey, with an elegant epitaph by his steady friend Dr. Johnson.

Goldsmith was awkward and uncouth in his person and manners. He did not shine in company, and seems to have had more than the common propensity to blundering and confusion of ideas which is generally attributed to his countrymen. He had no powers of conversation, and seems to have been in some measure the butt of the wits with whom he associated. This consciousness of inferiority, which is never perhaps felt so much as in what regards personal intercourse, probably occasioned the feeling of envy to which it is acknowledged he was unfortunately subject. He was generous; and a great part of his expenses, as well as the most laudable, consisted in benefactions to poor authors and other objects of his beneficence. He had known distress, and was never tardy in relieving it. In other respects he was a man rather of fine feelings than of pure morals. Unfortunately they do not always go together.

The last piece that came from his pen was a little poem, entitled *Retaliation*, which was written by way of retort to the raillery of his friends at the literary club, who had been amusing themselves with writing humorous

epitaphs upon him. The characters which, in the form of epitaphs, he has given in return, are drawn with spirit, and upon the whole cannot be called severe; but sport of this kind always carries a sting in it. In the character of Garrick, the inordinate appetite for praise of that accomplished actor was too truly touched not to irritate the jealousy of his self-love, and he retaliated by an epigrammatic fable of much more severity.

Of all the walks in which Goldsmith exercised his genius, that of poetry is the one in which it shone the brightest. Of his compositions in this line the bulk is small; but for beautiful description, touching sentiment, and a harmony of versification that operates like a charm upon any one who has an ear for poetry, they are scarcely exceeded by any in the language. His *Vicar of Wakefield* is the only Novel he ever wrote, and it is one of the most pleasing we have. It is in this work that the author's talent for humour most successfully displays itself. Many of the incidents are irresistibly comic. Such are the gravity and self-importance of Moses, when he produces his bargain of spectacles with silver rims; the expedition to church upon Blackberry and Dobbin; the family picture, which was too large to enter the doors; the slyness of the vicar in overturning the cosmetic, while he pretended to stir the fire; and the schemes and plottings of good notable Mrs. Primrose with her gooseberry wine. We are at once touched and diverted with the harmless vanities of the whole group, joined with innocence and benevolence. The character of the vicar somewhat resembles Par-

son Adams, and perhaps still more the author's own village pastor, "a man to all the country dear." He is distinguished from the former by an admirable vein of dry humour, and resembles him in the honest simplicity of a man without guile: to this is joined a touch of professional vanity. In the serious parts of the story his behaviour is highly dignified; and it is hoped there are few who can read his discourse in the prison, when the good man is stripped of his all and overwhelmed with calamities, without feeling those emotions at once salutary and gratifying, which goodness and piety bearing up against misfortune are calculated to inspire. The benevolence and piety of Adams have always something ludicrous in them: the Vicar of Wakefield is a higher character. His kind feelings towards his family, the affecting tenderness with which he receives again his repentant daughter, his hospitality and flowing benevolence, with his behaviour in every scene of distress, make him a pleasing and venerable character, and are evidently painted by a man who, whatever were his faults, strongly felt the enthusiasm of virtue and piety.

The plot of this piece is full of improbabilities and absurdities. All that relates to the two kept-mistresses is coarse and low; the character of Burchell, alias Sir William, is too romantic for a representation of real life, and even in his love there is a great want of delicacy, or he would not have insulted his mistress with pretending to make a match between her and the fellow Jenkinson:—but whatever be its faults, we easily

forgive the author, who has made us laugh, and has made us cry. In the adventures of the eldest son the author has related some of the vicissitudes of his own life. It must not be forgotten that this novel is enriched with two specimens of the author's poetical powers. The first, "When lovely woman stoops to folly," is wonderfully pathetic. It is sweet as music, and polished like a gem. *The Hermit* is a most pleasing tale, and has always been very popular. The idea of it is supposed to be taken from Percy's *Friar of Orders grey*; but Goldsmith asserted that if there was any resemblance, the *Friar* was taken from his *Hermit*, which he says he read to Percy, and that Percy the next time he saw him told him he had made use of his plan to weave together the fragments of Shakespear. It is worthy of remark that this novel has been imitated by La Fontaine, a very pleasing novelist of the present age, under the title of *Tableaux de Famille*. La Fontaine, like our author, excels in pictures of domestic life and touches of *naïveté*; but he by no means possesses the humour, the irresistible humour, of Goldsmith.

WALPOLE.

THE Castle of Otranto was written by The Honourable Horace Walpole, son of Sir Robert Walpole, who at the close of his life became Earl of Orford. It was printed at Strawberry Hill, and composed, the author tells us in one of his letters, in eight days or rather evenings. Though a slight performance, it is calculated to make a great impression upon those who relish the fictions of the *Arabian Tales*, and similar performances. It was one of the first of the modern productions founded on appearances of terror.

Since this author's time, from the perusal of Mrs. Radcliffe's productions and some of the German tales, we may be said to have "supped full with horrors," but none of those compositions have a livelier play of fancy than *The Castle of Otranto*. It is the sportive effusion of a man of genius, who throws the reins loose upon the neck of his imagination. The large limbs of the gigantic figure which inhabits the castle, and which are visible at intervals; the plumes of the helmet, which rise and wave with ominous meaning; and the various enchant-

ments of the place, are imagined with the richness and wildness of poetic fancy. A sufficient degree of interest is thrown into the novel part of the story; but in the characters of some of the attendants there is an attempt at humour which has not succeeded.

The works of Horace Walpole are well known. He was a gentleman author, and wrote and printed for his own amusement, living in literary ease at his elegant seat of Strawberry Hill, in the architecture and furniture of which he has also shown a predilection for the romantic ideas connected with gothic and chivalrous times. He always moved in the highest circles of company, and joined the man of fashion and man of wit to the elegant scholar. Mr. Walpole was fond of French literature, and few Englishmen have more imbibed the spirit and taste of the writers of that nation. His little *jeu d'esprit* upon Rousseau is well known.

The Castle of Otranto is much in the spirit of the tales of Count Hamilton. In one of those tales we meet with a vast leg of a giant, which probably suggested the prodigy in the former. Horace Walpole wrote, *A Catalogue of royal and noble Authors*; *Anecdotes of Painting, enlarged from Vertue*; *An Essay on modern Gardening*, in which there is a good deal of taste; and *The Mysterious Mother*, a tragedy. The last work was much spoken of while it was handed about with a certain air of secrecy, but sunk into neglect soon after it was published. Not but that there are some fine lines, and some strong moral sentiment in the piece; but no play

could be expected to support itself under a subject so disgustingly repulsive. The story itself is in the *Gesta Romanorum*, and in Taylor's *Cases of Conscience*; and as in a play it never could be acted, it had better have remained in the form of a story.

Lord Orford's works have been published since his death, in a pompous edition, with his letters and some posthumous fragments, in both of which there is a good deal of light easy wit and entertaining court anecdote; but what is new in them has not been made very accessible to the public in general, as it is not to be had without purchasing works which they were long before in possession of.

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CLARA REEVE.

THE Old English Baron, though a novel of but a moderate degree of merit, has been always a great favourite with the novel-reading public, and as such is here introduced; for, though subsequent publications of more elegance and more invention have caused it to slide down from the place it once held; it is still generally agreeable to young people who are fond of the serious and the wonderful; and as it inspires none but noble and proper sentiments, it can do them no harm, except it should make them afraid to go up stairs to bed, by themselves, on a winter's night.

This work is something of a medium between the old romance and the modern novel. The scene is placed in England, in the reigns of Henry the Fifth and Sixth; the manners such as they are supposed to be in chivalrous times. The story is simple and well connected: it turns upon the discovery of a murder, and the consequent restoration of an heir to his title and estate. The opening is striking:—Sir Philip, the old baron, is a fine character; the man-

ners and dialogue of the peasants are sufficiently well executed.

With regard to the wonderful part of the story, the writer does not, like the author of *The Castle of Otranto*, give unlimited play to her imagination in the supernatural means she employs. She says in her preface, "We can conceive and allow for the appearance of a ghost." The appearances she has introduced are therefore such as, till lately, coincided with the belief, perhaps, of the generality of readers; haunted rooms, presaging dreams, groans, clanking of chains, and apparitions of murdered persons; such ornaments as, the author seems to think, come within the verge—the utmost verge of probability; and to those whose minds are thus properly imbued, the story will be striking. At present we should require these appearances to be more artful, or more singular.

The chief fault of it is, that we foresee the conclusion before we have read twenty pages: but this is not the case with the young and unpractised reader; and those who have read *The Old English Baron* at an early time of life are generally conscious at a much later period of the impression it once made upon their youthful fancy.

Mrs. Clara Reeve, the author, wrote a variety of novels with different success: her last was *Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon, natural Son of Edward the Black Prince; with Anecdotes of the Times*. In this work she has shown a good deal of reading, and has exhibited all that could be met with of the ceremonies and usages

of the splendid reign of Edward the Third, joined to that high sense of virtue supposed to belong to the chivalrous times, but for which they are entirely indebted to the writers of romance. Mrs. Reeve also translated, from the Latin, *Barclay's Argenis and Parthenis*, and published it under the title of *The Phœnix*, and she wrote *The Progress of Romance*; an account of works of fiction, interspersed with reflections, in dialogue.

This lady died at Ipswich, in Jan. 1808, at the age of seventy; in very narrow circumstances, notwithstanding she had written so much. She thus expresses herself on some occasion in a letter to a friend: "I have been all my life straitened in my circumstances, and used my pen to support a scanty establishment; yet, to the best of my knowledge, I have drawn it on the side of truth, virtue and morality."

MRS. LENNOX.

MRS. LENNOX, a very respectable writer, was born at New York. She was a diligent and successful author. She performed a useful service to English literature by translating *Sully's Memoirs*, as also *Brumoy's Greek Theatre*. She likewise gave to the world *Shakespear Illustrated*, in three volumes; being a collection of the tales and histories upon which the plays of Shakespear are founded. Her original works are some comedies, and a number of novels, of which latter *The Female Quixote* and *Henrietta* are esteemed the best. Her exertions did not place her in easy circumstances, for she died poor in 1804.

The Female Quixote, published in 1752, is an agreeable and ingenious satire upon the old romances; not the more ancient ones of chivalry, but the languishing love romances of the Calprenédes and Scuderis. Arabella, the heroine, is supposed to have been brought up in the country, and secluded, during the life of her father, from all society, but allowed to amuse herself in an old library furnished with the works of those voluminous authors. Of course she

imbibes their sentiments, and at her father's death she comes out into the world, possessed of beauty and fortune, but with a profound ignorance of every circumstance of real life and manners. She fancies every man who speaks to her to be secretly in love with her, and is in continual apprehensions of being forcibly carried off. The gardener she imagines to be a prince in disguise, and is extremely shocked when her supposed lover is turned away for stealing carp. Meantime she is beloved by her cousin, an amiable young gentleman and every way suitable to her; nor has she any dislike to her admirer, but that she finds him very deficient in the code of gallantry prescribed by her favourite authors. She insists upon his reading some of them; but not having brought to the task a sufficient degree of attention, he gets into disgrace with her by not knowing that Orontes and Orondates are the same person; which betrays that he has not read as far as she had enjoined him. Many other incidents have a good deal of humour. Arabella, for instance, calls a lady's waiting-maid into her closet, and gravely desires her to relate, according to immemorial custom, the *adventures* of her lady. The surprise of the waiting-maid is extreme; the more, as her lady happens to have had some adventures of a nature she would not wish to be talked of.

The falsification of history in these romances, which was the fault Boileau chiefly exposed in his satire, is agreeably ridiculed by the incident of a conversation which passes between the heroine and a gentleman who is introduced to her

as one who possesses a great knowledge of history and of the ancients, and whom she strangely perplexes by questions and anecdotes of Cyrus, and Clelia, and Horatius Cocles, which he cannot explain or answer by any information his reading has furnished him with. The young lady's cousin is represented as more patient of her extravagancies than most modern lovers would be; but she is painted as amiable, and, like Don Quixote, rational in every respect where her particular whim is not touched.

The work is rather spun out too much, and not very well wound up. The grave moralizing of a clergyman is not the means by which the heroine should have been cured of her reveries. She should have been recovered by the sense of ridicule; by falling into some absurd mistake, or by finding herself on the brink of becoming the prey of some romantic footman, like the ladies in Moliere's piece of *Les Précieuses Ridicules*, the ridicule of which has pretty much the same bearing.

The performance of Mrs. Lennox is the best of the various *Quixotes* which have been written in imitation of the immortal Cervantes, and forms a fair counterpart to it, as it presents a similar extravagance, yet drawn from a later class of authors, and more adapted to female reading. It has also one disadvantage in common with that work, namely, that the satire has now no object. Most young ladies of the present day, instead of requiring to be cured of reading those bulky romances, would acquire

the first information of their manner from the work designed to ridicule them.

It is observable that Dryden, as Mrs. Lennox asserts, has borrowed characters and incidents in his plays from these works. No doubt there were many things in them to admire; nor is it very improbable that, in the rage for reviving every thing that is old, they may make their appearance again in a modern quarto of hot-pressed paper, with a life and an engraving from the original portrait of Mad^{lle} Scudery by Nanteuil, with her elegant verses under it.

The style of Mrs. Lennox is easy, but it does not rise to the elegance attained by many more modern female writers.

Her *Henrietta* is not without merit. It begins with the incident of two young ladies who are perfect strangers to each other, meeting in a stage-coach, when, after a few minutes conversation, one of them exclaims, "Let us swear an eternal friendship,"—the sentiment and the very words brought forward to ridicule the modern German plays, in the well-known humorous parody of them in *The Anti-Jacobin* :

JOHNSON.

HERCULES, it is said, once wielded the distaff; and the Hercules of literature, Dr. Johnson, has not disdained to be the author of a novel. To say the truth, nothing which he has written has more the touch of genius than *Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia*: nor do any of his performances bear stronger marks of his peculiar character. It is solemn, melancholy and philosophical. The frame of the story is an elegant and happy exertion of fancy. It was probably suggested to his mind from recollections of the impression made upon his fancy by a book which he translated when he first entered on his literary career, namely, *Father Lobo's Account of a Voyage to Abyssinia*.

In that country, it is said, the younger branches of the royal family, instead of being sacrificed, as in some of the Eastern monarchies, to the jealousy of the reigning sovereign, are secluded from the world in a romantic and beautiful valley, where they are liberally provided with every thing that can gratify their tastes or amuse their solitude. This recess, which Dr. Johnson calls *the happy valley*, he has described with much richness of imagination. It is represented as being shut in by inaccessible mountains, and only to be entered through a cavern closed up with massy gates of iron, which were thrown

open only once a year, on the annual visit of the emperor. At that time artists and teachers of every kind, capable of contributing to the amusement or solace of the princes, were admitted; but once admitted, they were immured for life with the royal captives. Every charm of nature and every decoration of art is supposed to be collected in this charming spot, and that its inhabitants had been, in general, content with the round of amusements provided for them, till at length Rasselas, a young prince of a sprightly and active genius, grows weary of an existence so monotonous, and is seized with a strong desire of seeing the world at large. In pursuance of this project, he contrives to dig a passage through the mountain, and to escape from this paradise with his favourite sister Nekayah and her attendant, and the philosopher who had assisted them in their enterprise, and who, being previously acquainted with the world, is to assist their inexperience. They are all equally disgusted with the languor of sated desires and the inactivity of unvaried quiet, and agree to range the world in order to make their *choice of life*.

The author, having thus stretched his canvass, proceeds to exhibit and to criticize the various situations and modes of human existence; public life and private; marriage and celibacy; commerce, rustic employments, religious retirement, &c., and finds that in all there is something good and something bad—that marriage has many pains, but celibacy has no pleasures; that the hermit cannot secure himself from vice, but by retiring from the exercise of virtue; that

shepherds are boors, and philosophers—only men. Unable to decide amidst such various appearances of good and evil, and having seen enough of the world to be disgusted with it, they end their search by resolving to return with the first opportunity in order to end their days in the happy valley; and this, to use the author's words in the title of his last chapter, is "the conclusion, in which nothing is concluded."

Such is the philosophic view which Dr. Johnson and many others have taken of life; and such indecision would probably be the consequence of thus narrowly sifting the advantages and disadvantages of every station in this mixt state, if done without that feeling reference to each man's particular position, and particular inclinations, which is necessary to incline the balance. If we choose to imagine an insulated being, detached from all connexions and all duties, it may be difficult for mere reason to direct his choice; but no man is so insulated: we are woven into the web of society, and to each individual it is seldom dubious what *he* shall do. Very different is the search after abstract good, and the pursuit of what a being born and nurtured amidst innumerable ties of kindred and companionship, feeling his own wants, impelled by his own passions, and influenced by his own peculiar associations, finds best for *him*. Except he is indolent or fastidious, he will seldom hesitate upon his choice of life. The same position holds good with regard to duty. We may bewilder ourselves in abstract questions of general good, or puzzle our moral sense with imagi-

nary cases of conscience; but it is generally obvious enough to every man what duty dictates to him, in each particular case, as it comes before him.

The proper moral to be drawn from *Rasselas* is, therefore, not that goods and evils are so balanced against each other that no unmixed happiness is to be found in life,—a deduction equally trite and obvious; nor yet that a reasoning man can make no choice,—but rather that a *merely* reasoning man will be likely to make no choice,—and therefore that it becomes every man to make early that choice to which his particular position, his honest partialities, his individual propensities, his early associations impel him. Often does it happen that, while the over-refined and speculative are hesitating and doubting, the plain honest youth has secured happiness. Without this conclusion, the moral effect of the piece, loaded as it is with the miseries of life, and pointing out no path of action as more eligible than another, would resemble that of *Candide*, where the party, after all their adventures, agree to plant cabbages in their own garden: but the gloomy ideas of the English philosopher are softened and guarded by sound principles of religion.

Along with Voltaire, he strongly paints and perhaps exaggerates the miseries of life; but instead of evading their force by laughing at them, or drawing from them a satire against Providence, which *Candide* may be truly said to be, our author turns the mind to the solid consolations of a future state: “All,” says he, “that

virtue can afford is quietness of conscience, and a steady prospect of a future state: this may enable us to endure calamity with patience, but remember that patience must suppose pain."

Such is the plan of this philosophical romance, in the progress of which the author makes many just strictures on human life, and many acute remarks on the springs of human passions; but they are the passions of the species, not of the individual. It is life, as viewed at a distance by a speculative man, in a kind of bird's-eye view; not painted with the glow and colouring of an actor in the busy scene: we are not led to say, "This man is painted naturally," but, "Such is the nature of man." The most striking of his pictures is that of the philosopher, who imagined himself to have the command of the weather, and who had fallen into that species of insanity by indulging in the luxury of solitary musing, or what is familiarly called castle-building. His state is strikingly and feelingly described, and no doubt with the peculiar interest arising from what the author had felt and feared in his own mind; for it is well known that at times he suffered under a morbid melancholy near akin to derangement, which occasionally clouded his mighty powers; and no doubt he had often indulged in these unprofitable abstractions of thought, these seducing excursions of fancy.

The following remark ought to startle those who have permitted their mind to feed itself in solitude with its own creations and wishes. "All power of fancy over reason is a degree of insanity; but while this power is such as we can

control or repress, it is not visible to others, nor considered as any depravation of the mental faculties. In time, some particular train of ideas fixes the attention, all other intellectual gratifications are rejected. By degrees the reign of fancy is confirmed; she grows first imperious, and in time despotic; then fictions begin to operate as realities, false opinions fasten upon the mind, and life passes away in dreams of rapture or of anguish."

Rasselas is, perhaps, of all its author's works, that in which his peculiar style best harmonizes with the subject. That pompous flow of diction, that measured harmony of periods, that cadenced prose which Dr. Johnson introduced, though it would appear stiff and cumbrous in the frame of a common novel, is sanctioned by the imitation, or what our authors have agreed to call imitation, of the Eastern style, a style which has been commonly adopted in *Almorán and Hamet*, *Tales of the Genii*, and other works, in which the costume is taken from nations whose remoteness destroys the idea of colloquial familiarity. We silence our reason by the laws we have imposed upon our fancy, and are content that both Nekayah and her female attendant, at the sources of the Nile, or the foot of the Pyramid, should express themselves in language which would appear unnaturally inflated in the mouths of a young lady and her waiting-maid conversing together in London or in Paris. It has been remarked, however, that Nekayah, it is difficult to say why, is more philosophical than her brother.

It has been already mentioned that the frame

of this piece was probably suggested by the author's having some years before translated an account of Abyssinia. It may be remarked by the way, how different an idea of the country and its inhabitants seems to have been entertained at that time from that which is suggested by the accounts of Bruce and Lord Valentia. Thomson, who probably took his ideas from the voyage-writers of the time, represents the country of "jealous Abyssinia" as a perfect paradise, "a world within itself; disdaining all assault;" and mentions the "palaces, and fanes, and villas, and gardens, and cultured fields" of this innocent and amiable people with poetic rapture. We must suppose that Father Lobo never had the honour of dancing with them on a gala-day.

Rasselas was published in 1759, and was then composed for the purpose of enabling the author to visit his mother in her last illness, and for defraying the expenses of her funeral. It was written with great rapidity; for the author himself has told us that it was composed in the evenings of one week, sent to the press in portions as it was written, and never reperused when finished. It was much read, and has been translated into several languages. Rich indeed must be the stores of that mind which could pour out its treasures with such rapidity, and clothe its thoughts, almost spontaneously, in language so correct and ornamented.

Perhaps the genius of Dr. Johnson has been in some measure mistaken. The ponderosity of his manner has led the world to give him more credit for science, and less for fancy, than

the character of his works will justify. His remarks on life and manners are just and weighty, and show a philosophical mind, but not an original turn of thinking. The novelty is in the style ; but originality of style belongs to that dress and colouring of our thoughts in which imagination is chiefly concerned.

In fact, imagination had great influence over him. His ideas of religion were awful and grand, and he had those feelings of devotion which seldom subsist in a strong degree in a cold and phlegmatic mind ; but his religion was tinctured with superstition, his philosophy was clouded with partialities and prejudices, his mind was inclined to melancholy.

In the work before us he has given testimony to his belief in apparitions, and has shown a leaning towards monastic institutions. Of his discoveries in any region of science posterity will be able to speak but little ; but in his *Ramblers* he will be considered as having formed a new style, and his *Rasselas*, and *Vision of Theodore*, must give him an honourable place among those writers who deck philosophy with the ornamented diction and the flowers of fancy.

It should not be forgotten to be noticed in praise of *Rasselas*, that it is, as well as all the other works of its author, perfectly pure. In describing the happy valley, he has not, as many authors would have done, painted a luxurious bower of bliss, nor once throughout the work awakened any ideas which might be at variance with the moral truths which all his writings are meant to inculcate.

HAWKESWORTH.

THE praise which was universally bestowed on the little Eastern tales which Dr. Hawkesworth had introduced in the papers of his *Adventurer*, probably suggested to him the idea of giving a more extended story in the same style, and produced his *Almorán and Hamet*. It is not, however, equal to the beautiful allegory of the *ring*, or the sublime imagery of *Carazan*. In extended compositions of this kind, we miss the captivating richness and wildness of the genuine Eastern tales; and the desire to elicit a moral is commonly too apparent. The style also, which is generally adopted in these tales, inclines to the turgid, and is apt to become tiresome in a narrative of any length. *Vathek* is the only modern composition which has seized the genuine spirit of the Arabian tales: there is indeed in that fiction so much of the fancy peculiar to the East, that it is difficult to imagine it has not had some genuine tale of that origin for its basis.

Almorán and Hamet may, notwithstanding, be read with a degree of pleasure, especially by

youth, to whom the allegorical mode of writing is generally more agreeable than it is to those of more advanced life. The design is to show that no outward circumstances, even such as may be produced by changing the course of nature, are sufficient to procure happiness, if the mind is not fitted for it by virtuous dispositions. There is merit in the idea of making Almorán, under the form of Hamet, incapable of taking advantage of his transformation in securing the affections of his mistress, which become immediately alienated from that beloved form, when she finds the mind of her supposed lover no longer the same. She despises Almorán under the form of Hamet, and transfers her love to the real Hamet, believing him to be Almorán : but much more might have been made of the frame of the story than is made of it.

Dr. Hawkesworth's genius was not of the first order ; but it was elegant, pleasing, and remarkably adapted to those purposes of moral instruction and innocent entertainment to which he uniformly devoted it.

MRS. BROOKE.

FRANCES BROOKE, whose maiden name was Moore, an elegant and accomplished woman, was the wife of a clergyman. She had, at one time, a share in the management of the Opera House. Her publications are numerous. She wrote a periodical paper entitled *The Old Maid*, and some pieces for the theatre. She translated *Lady Catesby's Letters* from the French, and several other works. The two novels by which she is best known are *Emily Montague*, and *Lady Julia Mandeville*. The latter is a simple, well connected story, told with elegance and strong effect. It is a forcible appeal to the feelings against the savage practice of duelling. *Emily Montague* is less interesting in the story, which serves but as a thread to connect a great deal of beautiful description of the manners and scenery of Canada, which country the author had visited. Mrs. Brooke was perhaps the first female novel-writer who attained a perfect purity and polish of style. The whole is correct and easy, and many passages are highly beautiful.

What can be more animated than the description of the breaking up of the vast body of ice which forms what is called the *bridge*, from Quebec to Point Levi? "The ice before the town being five feet thick, a league in length,

and more than a mile broad, resists for a long time the rapid tide that attempts to force it from the banks. At length," she says, "the hour is come. I have been with a crowd of both sexes, and all ranks, hailing the propitious moment. Our situation on the top of Cape Diamond gave us a prospect some leagues above and below the town. Above Cape Diamond the river was open; it was so below Point Levi, the rapidity of the current having forced a passage for the water under the transparent bridge, which for more than a league continued firm. We stood waiting with all the eagerness of expectation; the tide came rushing in with amazing impetuosity; the bridge seemed to shake, yet resisted the force of the waters; the tide recoiled, it made a pause, it stood still, it returned with a redoubled fury,—the immense mass of ice gave way. A vast plain appeared in motion; it advanced with solemn and majestic pace; the points of land on the banks of the river for a few moments stopped its progress; but the immense weight of so prodigious a body, carried along by a rapid current, bore down all opposition with a force irresistible."

The manners of the Canadians are equally well described: and this lady's account both of the climate and the people corresponds to the favourable impression which other travellers give us, both of the country and the inhabitants; the climate healthy and pleasant, though cold, and the inhabitants preserving so near the pole the gaiety and urbanity of their native France. This lady died in 1789.

MRS. INCHBALD.

TO readers of taste it would be superfluous to point out the beauties of Mrs Inchbald's novels. The *Simple Story* has obtained the decided approbation of the best judges. There is an originality both in the characters and the situations which is not often found in similar productions. To call it a *simple story* is perhaps a misnomer, since the first and second parts are in fact two distinct stories, connected indeed by the character of Dorriforth, which they successively serve to illustrate.

Dorriforth is introduced as a Romish priest of a lofty mind, generous, and endued with strong sensibilities, but having in his disposition much of sternness and inflexibility. His being in priest's orders presents an apparently insurmountable obstacle to his marriage; but it is got over, without violating probability, by his becoming heir to a title and estate, and on that account receiving a dispensation from his vows. Though slow to entertain thoughts of love, as soon as he perceives the partiality of his ward, it enters his breast like a torrent when the flood-gates are opened. The perplexities in which he is involved by Miss Milner's gay unthinking conduct bring them to the very brink of separating for ever; and very few scenes in any novel have a finer effect than the intended parting of the lovers.

and their sudden, immediate, unexpected marriage.

It is impossible not to sympathize with the feelings of Miss Milner, when she sees the corded trunks standing in the passage; or again, when after their reconciliation she sees the carriage, which was to take away her lover, drive empty from the door. The character of the ward of Dorriforth is so drawn as to excite an interest such as we seldom feel for more faultless characters. Young, sprightly, full of sensibility, gay and thoughtless, we feel such a tenderness for her as we should for a child who is playing on the brink of a precipice. The break between the first and second parts of the story has a singularly fine effect. We pass over in a moment a large space of years, and find every thing changed: scenes of love and conjugal happiness are vanished; and for the young, gay, thoughtless, youthful beauty, we see a broken-hearted penitent on her death-bed.

This sudden shifting of the scene has an effect which no continued narrative could produce; an effect which even the scenes of real life could not produce; for the curtain of futurity is lifted up only by degrees, and we must wait the slow succession of months and years to bring about events which are here presented close together. The death-bed letter of Lady Milner is very solemn, and cannot be perused without tears.

Dorriforth in these latter volumes is become, from the contemplation of his injuries, morose, unrelenting, and tyrannical. How far it was possible for a man to resist the strong impulse of nature, and deny himself the sight of his

child residing in the same house with him, the reader will determine ; but the situation is new and striking.

It is a particular beauty in Mrs. Inchbald's compositions, that they are thrown so much into the dramatic form. There is little of mere narrative, and in what there is of it, the style is careless ; but all the interesting parts are carried on in dialogue :—we see and hear the persons themselves ; we are but little led to think of the author, and it is only when we have done feeling that we begin to admire.

The only other novel which Mrs. Inchbald has given to the public is *Nature and Art*. It is of a slighter texture than the former, and put together without much attention to probability ; the author's object being less to give a regular story, than to suggest reflections on the political and moral state of society. For this purpose two youths are introduced, one of whom is educated in all the ideas and usages of civilized life ; the other (the child of Nature) without any knowledge of or regard to them. This is the frame which has been used by Mr. Day and others for the same purpose, and naturally tends to introduce remarks more lively than solid, and strictures more epigrammatic than logical, on the differences between rich and poor, the regard paid to rank, and such topics, on which it is easy to dilate with an appearance of reason and humanity ; while it requires a much profounder philosophy to suggest any alteration in the social system, which would not be rather Utopian than beneficial.

There is a beautiful stroke in this part of the work, where Henry, who, according to Rousseau's plan, had not been taught to pray till he was of an age to know what he was doing, kneels down for the first time with great emotion; and on being asked if he was not afraid to speak to God, says, "To be sure I trembled very much when I first knelt, but when I came to the words 'Our Father who art in heaven,' they gave me courage, for I know how kind a father is."

But by far the finest passage in this novel is the meeting between Hannah and her seducer, when he is seated as judge upon the bench, and, without recollecting the former object of his affection, pronounces sentence of death upon her. The shriek she gives, and her exclamation, "Oh, not from you!" electrifies the reader, and cannot but stir the coldest feelings.

Judgement and observation may sketch characters, and often put together a good story; but strokes of pathos, such as the one just mentioned, or the dying-scene in Mrs. Opie's *Father and Daughter*, can only be attained by those whom nature has endowed with her choicest gifts.

One cannot help wishing the author had been a little more liberal of happiness to poor Henry, who sits down contented with poverty and his half-withered Rebecca.

There is another wish the public has often formed, namely, that these two productions were not the *only* novels of such a writer as Mrs. Inchbald.

MACKENZIE.

WITH the readers of sentimental novels, those of Mr. Mackenzie have been great favourites. They exhibit real powers of pathos, though the judicious reader will probably be of opinion that at the time they were published they were somewhat overrated. They imitate the manner of Sterne, who was then much in fashion, and whose light and delicate touches of nature had made so strong an impression that it raised a kind of school of writers in that walk.

The very title of *The Man of Feeling* sufficiently indicates that the writer means to take strong aim at the heart of the reader. It is difficult, however, to form a clear and consistent idea of the character of the hero of the piece. The author has given him extreme sensibility, but of that timid and melancholy cast which nearly incapacitates a man for the duties of life and the energies of action. The general impression upon the reader is that of a man "sick-limed o'er with the pale cast of thought," languid and delicate; yet he is also supposed to be animated by that ardent and impetuous enthusiasm which acts by sudden and irresistible impulses,

and disregards every maxim of prudence: in short, a temperament like that of Mr. Cumberland's *West-Indian*.

When Harley is about to relieve the prostitute, to whom, by the way, he had given half-a-guinea the night before, and who could not therefore be in any immediate danger of perishing, he was in such a hurry that, "though two vibrations of a pendulum would have served him to lock his bureau, they could not be spared." Yet with these lively and ungovernable feelings, this man of sensibility, being deeply in love with a young lady, who seems all along to have had a very tender partiality for him, allows himself to languish and pine away without declaring his passion; and at length dies, whether of love or of a consumption is not very clear, without having made any effort to obtain her hand. We are not more active in serving others than in serving ourselves: such a one might be "a man of feeling," but his benevolence would be confined to mere sensations. Yet the last chapter, entitled, *The Man of Feeling made happy*, the reader will find, at least if he happen to be in a tender mood, pathetic. Harley, in the last stage of weakness, has an interview with his mistress, in which he receives an avowal of her regard for him, and then dies contented.

But by far the most interesting part of this novel is the story of Edwards, particularly the scene where he is taken by the press-gang. It would be a good subject for the painter. It deserves the pencil of Mr. Wilkie. The whole harmless family are represented in high glee,

playing at blind-man's buff; young Edwards, with his eyes covered, is trying to guess which of them he has caught, when the ruffian's voice bursts upon him like thunder, and overwhelms them all with despair. Yet, in endeavouring to draw as many tears as he can from his readers, an author of this class is apt to represent the virtuous and industrious in low life as continually exposed to oppression and injustice, and it is hardly to be wished that even our virtuous feelings should be awakened at the expense of truth. There is no connected story in this work, except that of Edwards. The thread of the history is supposed to be broken by the imperfection of the manuscript. A convenient supposition.

Julia de Roubigné is in the same cast of tender sorrow, but has the advantage of a connected story, which, though simple, has much effect. The scenes of domestic life, and the affections which belong to them, are in many places beautifully touched; but an uniform hue of sadness pervades the whole. The sentiments are all pure, and the style exhibits fewer marks of imitation than the former work. It is in general elegant, though here and there a negligent expression occurs, as, "he was abed," for "he was in bed," "he used to joke me." Upon the whole, though these two novels have obtained great celebrity, at least in their day, they still fall short of the exquisitely beautiful story of *La Roche*, by the same author, published in *The Mirror*.

SMOLLET.

TOBIAS SMOLLET, one of the most prolific as well as popular of our novel-writers, was born in the year 1721, at the farm of Dalquhurn on the banks of the Leven, amidst some of the most picturesque scenery of Scotland, to the beauties of which he afterwards paid an elegant poetical tribute. His father was the fourth son of Sir James Smollet, of Bonhill : he married, without his father's consent, a lady of no fortune ; and dying soon after the birth of his youngest son, his family, consisting of two sons and a daughter, were left entirely dependent on the bounty of their grandfather for a subsistence. The eldest, James, went into the army. His regiment was ordered abroad ; and the transport in which he was, with part of the troops, was unfortunately lost off the coast of America. He is mentioned as a young man of great promise, and Dr. Smollet always preserved towards him an affectionate remembrance.

Tobias, the subject of this memoir, was put to school at Dumbarton, where it is recorded that the first efforts of his genius were shown in a copy of verses to the memory of Wallace,

several of whose adventures took place in the vicinity ; for he had always a large share of that national spirit by which his countrymen are generally distinguished. Young Tobias, however, was not always in the heroic mood. Many stories are told of his exploits ; and many acts of boyish mischief and frolic, recorded in *Roderick Random*, are supposed to be supplied from the memory of his own early years. From Dumbarton he was removed to Glasgow, where he was apprenticed to a surgeon, Mr. John Gordon, and at the same time attended the University lectures of anatomy and medicine. At Glasgow he began to display that vein of humour, and propensity to satire, which afterwards so strongly distinguished him, at the expense of the circles to which he had access, and even ventured to aim the shafts of his ridicule against some of the graver sort, whose exterior of piety he represented, possibly with truth, as only worn in compliance with the costume of the country. This, as may be supposed, gave great offence.

His grandfather died while he was at Glasgow : and though he had maintained the family in a decent manner while he lived, and would probably have continued so to do, he made little or no provision for them at his death ; and Smollet on this event, his apprenticeship being finished, came up to London to seek his fortune. On this occasion he was in want of money and recommendations ; his friends supplied him very sparingly with the former, but were uncommonly liberal, he used to observe, in the latter article.

He soon got a situation as surgeon's mate in a ship of the line, and acted as such in the unfortunate expedition to Carthagena which took place in the year 1741. Of this he published an account, joining with those who threw great blame on the commander. The scenes he was here witness to made the strongest impression on his mind, and he has given them with great strength of colouring in his *Roderick Random*. Whoever reads that book will not wonder that he was disgusted with the sea-service, which he soon quitted, though he was certain of promotion; and resided some time in Jamaica, where he married a lady of the name of Lascelles. He returned to London soon after the year 1745, and became writer by profession.

The talents of Smollet were vigorous, his powers of application strong, his execution rapid, and there were few departments of general literature in which at one time or other he did not engage. Poetry, history, novel-writing, travels, criticism, by turns employed his pen. At the age of eighteen he had written a play called *The Regicide*. The subject was the assassination of James the First of Scotland, the affecting story of which, as related by Buchanan, had deeply impressed his young mind. It was afterwards offered to the managers of the theatres, and, on their rejection, printed by subscription; a mode of publicity by which unsuccessful candidates have not unfrequently vindicated the sagacity of the managers. He does not seem to have studied euphony in the piece, if one may judge by the following speci-

men,—“*While grimly smiling Grime.*” He also wrote an opera, which was rejected by Rich; and the querulous disposition which always made a part of his nature, poured itself out in complaints, which the good sense he possessed would have told him, in any case but his own, were little interesting to any but the disappointed author.

In poetry the talents of Smollet were more respectable; he is the author of several pretty and elegant pieces, some of which, as *The Ode to Leven Water*, *The Tears of Scotland*, *Verses to a young Lady playing*, are written with tenderness and delicacy; while the *Ode to Independence* exhibits a manly vigour of thought, perhaps more analogous to the general tone of his mind. His *Tears of Scotland* was inspired by a generous sentiment for his country on occasion of the severities exercised there after the rebellion of 1745. He felt strongly on the occasion; for, in aid of his patriotism, he was a Tory if not a Jacobite; and when he was advised not to give any more copies of his Ode, lest it might hurt his interest, his only reply was the adding the following animated stanza:

“ While the warm blood bedews my veins,
And unimpair’d remembrance reigns,
Remembrance of my country’s fate
Within my filial breast shall beat;
And spite of the insulting foe,
My sympathizing verse shall flow,
‘Mourn, hapless Caledonia, mourn
Thy banish’d peace, thy laurels torn.’ ”

He also wrote two Satirical Epistles, with

something of the strength and also the coarseness of Churchill. They were well calculated to raise him enemies.

In 1748 Smollet began his career of a novelist by publishing *The Life and Adventures of Roderick Random*, a work replete with humour and character, for a long time universally read by novel-readers, and still a favourite, as are all Smollet's, with those who can overlook their grossness, vulgarity, and licentious morals. Smollet seems to have taken Le Sage in his *Gil Blas*, and Scarron in his *Roman Comique*, for his models.

Roderick Random, like *Gil Blas*, has little or nothing of regular plot, and no interest is excited for the hero, whose name serves to string together a number of adventures. This work is in a great measure the history of the author's own life. The novel opens with the story of a young couple turned out of doors by their father on account of an imprudent match, and their consequent distress. It is natural and affecting. The cool selfish character of the parent, the scene of the female relations besieging his death-bed, the opening of the will, and the disappointment of the gaping cousins, are all admirably drawn, and probably contain much of the author's own story on the death of his grandfather. The character of a British tar is portrayed in that of Tom Bowling, uncle to the hero of the piece. It has been the original of most sailor characters which have been since exhibited. He is drawn brave, blunt, generous, enthusiastically fond of his profession, and with

a mixture of surliness in the expression of his kindest affections. There is an admirable stroke of nature in his behaviour, when, after attending the opening of the will, he walks away with his nephew, indignant that nothing had been left him. Full of vexation, he quickens his pace, and walks so fast that the poor lad cannot keep up with him; upon which he calls out to him with a cross tone, "What! must I bring-to every moment for you; you lazy dog?" his anger thus venting itself on the very person on whose account that anger was excited. Into this novel the author has introduced an account of the expedition to Carthagera, and has given a strong and disgusting picture of the manner of living on board a man of war. It must give pleasure to the reader of the present day to consider how much the attention to health, cleanliness, and accommodation, in respect to our navy; has increased since that account was written. Still, it is probable, nothing can present a more horrible sight than the deck of a man of war after a battle. Many of the characters in these volumes are said to be portraits. Strap the barber, schoolfellow and humble friend of Random, was one Hugh Hewson, whose death was lately announced in the papers. Captain Whiffle was a particular nobleman. Much of the work is filled up with low jokes, and laughable stories, such as, one may suppose, had been circulated in a club over a bottle. Some incidental particulars mark the state of accommodations at that time. Roderick Random comes to London with the *pack-horses*, there

being then no stage waggon, and the inventory of his goods and linen was very probably Smollet's own.

Towards the hero of this tale the reader feels little interest ; but after he has been led through a variety of adventures, in which he exhibits as little of the amiable qualities as of the more respectable ones, the author, according to the laudable custom of novel-writers, leaves him in possession of a beautiful wife and a good estate.

In the summer of 1750 Dr. Smollet took a trip to Paris, and laid in a fund for a new display of character in his *Peregrine Pickle*. This is a work even more faulty than the former in its violation of decency and good morals. It has two or three characters of sailors not devoid of humour, though inferior to his first sketch of Tom Bowling. Commodore Trunnion is so rough and bearish, as scarcely to be like any thing human. He is the Caliban of Smollet. The wife is still more overcharged. Peregrine himself is a proud, disagreeable, ungrateful boy ; vicious, as soon as he could know what vice was, and who had deserved to be hanged long before the end of the first volume. The most entertaining and original part of *Peregrine* is the account of a classical feast, supposed to have been held by a learned physician and other gentlemen, after the manner of the ancients. In this there is humour, and a display of learning, though in the former it is inferior to Scriblerus. Dr. Akenside was meant to be marked out by the physician, and a painter whom he met at Paris furnished the character of Pallet.

The author has in this work shown his predilection for the party of the Stuarts, by introducing in a touching manner some Scottish gentlemen under exile for having engaged in the rebellion of 1745, whom Peregrine is supposed to meet at Boulogne, and who go every day to the sea-side to gaze with fond affection on the white cliffs of Britain, which they were never more to behold but at a distance. This Dr. Moore mentions as a real incident he was himself witness to, being with Smollet at the time. Many strictures on the government and manners of France are introduced into this work; some of them just, but tinged with that prejudice against French manners which he had deeply imbibed; and which showed itself afterwards in his travels.

The Memoirs of a Lady of Pleasure, Lady Vane, written by herself, are introduced into this work. They excited interest at the time, the lady being then much talked of, but can only now raise astonishment at the assurance which could give such a life without compunction.

It is probable that Smollet had been struck with the objections which must have been made to these two novels, that no poetical justice is exercised on the characters; for in his next piece, *Count Fathom*, he has exhibited, as the hero of his piece, a vicious character, who, after going through many scenes of triumphant villainy, is detected and punished: but the narration is far from pleasing; knavery is not dignified enough to interest us by its fall. There are more serious characters in this piece, and he has

attempted scenes of tenderness and exalted feeling, but with little success. Strong humour he possessed, but grace and delicacy were foreign to his pencil. He could not draw an interesting female character. But in his own way, the picture of Count Fathom's mother, the follower of a camp, is very striking. It is impossible to contemplate her going about, stripping the dying and the dead, with all the coolness of a mind long hardened by scenes of misery, without a thrill of horror. Count Fathom's adventure in the wood, where he is benighted, and narrowly escapes being murdered by ruffians, is exceedingly well told, and a man must have strong nerves to read it without shuddering. There is less of humour in this than in his two former works ; but the story of the sharper, who introduces himself to a gaming-table as a boisterous, ignorant country squire, and takes in the knowing ones, is very amusing.

Smollet's next publication was a translation of *Don Quixote*, generally esteemed the best we have, though some accused him of not having had sufficient acquaintance with the language of the original to do it complete justice. He also translated *Gil Blas*.

Dr. Smollet had by this time entirely given up the practice of physic. He made a tour to Scotland to visit his relations and friends, particularly his mother, to whom he introduced himself as a stranger. She was a woman of strong sense, and a great share of humour, which she retained to the end of life. She did not know him at first ; but as he could not entirely keep

his countenance, she threw her arms about his neck, saying, " Ah ! my son, your old roguish smile has betrayed you at once."

On his return to London he engaged in *The Critical Review*, the chief direction of which was in his hands for a number of years.—Reviewing is at best but an invidious office, and Smollet's temper was not formed to conciliate. It was the means of bringing him into continual quarrels. One of these was with Dr. Grainger, whose translation of *Tibullus* he had reviewed with some acrimony.

A little before this he had drawn upon himself a prosecution for an assault, in which he had caued a person who had injured him. This chastisement was magnified into an assassination. He was honourably acquitted ; but he gave vent to his indignation in a very angry letter to the prosecutor's counsel.

Another scrape he got into was on account of some strictures in the same Review on the conduct of Admiral Knowles, on occasion of a pamphlet published by him relative to a secret expedition which had failed. For this he was sentenced to a fine of a hundred pounds and three months imprisonment in the King's Bench. Dr. Smollet showed he had not forgotten this when he wrote his *History of England*, in which he mentions Admiral Knowles with great contempt.

About this time he published another novel, *The Adventures of Sir Launcelot Greaves*. It is an imitation of *Don Quixote*, and is but a flat performance.

While Smollet lay in the King's Bench, Garrick generously brought out a farce of his called *The Reprisals*, on which the author's former animosities against the manager were buried in oblivion; and he tells Garrick in a letter, that he hopes to have an opportunity of convincing him that his gratitude is at least as warm as any other of his passions.

As Smollet wrote neither for amusement nor for fame, but for subsistence, he soon engaged in another work, which, though hastily composed, had a large sale, namely, *A History of England*, in four volumes quarto. It was published in the year 1758, and is said to have been composed and finished for the press in fourteen months. Such facility of execution shows powers, but precludes excellence. The narrative is rapid and sprightly, and the characters are drawn with spirit; but it is a hasty work, and strongly tinctured with the political prejudices of the author. It was, however, acceptable to the public, and sold well, because we had at that time no history of credit which came down lower than the Revolution. A Continuation of it was published some years afterwards. In this history, under the head of Arts, he has taken occasion to mention with honour Akenside and others whom he had satirized in *Peregrine Pickle*. A high eulogium is also paid to Garrick; and he handsomely told him, that he deemed it incumbent upon him to make a public atonement in a work of truth, for wrongs done him in a work of fiction.

Smollet, having decidedly taken his political party, was engaged to write in defence of the

measures of the Earl of Bute, which he did in a weekly paper called *The Briton*. This occasioned the well-known *North Briton* of Wilkes, and broke off the friendly intercourse which, as men of literature and genius, they had hitherto held with one another.

Smollet's temper was not well calculated for calmness in such altercations, and the virulence with which he wrote *The Adventures of an Atom*, a political satire describing public characters that figured upon the stage at the end of the last reign and beginning of the present, lost him many of his best friends.

But his constitution now began to be much broken, and a heavy domestic affliction which fell upon him, the loss of an only daughter, led him to seek relief for himself and his wife in a foreign tour, of which he published an account under the title of *Letters from France and Italy*. They were entertaining, but full of spleen, and they betray those illiberal prejudices against foreigners and foreign manners of which he gave a specimen in *Peregrine Pickle*. Smollet never possessed the French language sufficiently to converse in it with freedom, and he probably thought he showed his own delicacy by finding fault with the national usages. Yet whoever reads Smollet's works, even the least exceptionable of them, will be of opinion that he had little title to be fastidious upon the score of delicacy. He was also disappointed in the Pantheon, which he calls *a huge cock-pit*, and was not enchanted with the *Venus de Medicis*. These animadversions drew upon him the lively satire of Sterne, who intro-

duces him in his *Sentimental Journey* under the appellation of Smelfungus. "The learned Smelfungus," says he, "travelléd from Boulogne to Paris, from Paris to Rome, and so on; but he set out with the spleen and jaundice, and every object he passed by was discoloured and distorted. He wrote an account of them, but it was nothing but an account of his miserable feelings. I met Smelfungus in the grand portico of the Pantheon; he was just coming out of it. 'It is nothing but a huge cockpit,' said he. 'I wish you had said nothing worse of the Venus de Medicis,' replied I. He had been flayed alive and bedeviled, and worse used than St. Bartholomew, at every stage he had come at. 'I'll tell it,' said Smelfungus, 'to the world.' 'You had better tell it,' said I, 'to your physician.'"

The last sentence suggests the best excuse for the author's misanthropy. However, the raillery of Sterne was too amusing to be forgotten, and gave a wound to the book from which it never recovered.

In 1766, he paid another visit to his native country; but his health was at this time so broken, that he was incapable of enjoying his tour. A fretfulness hung upon him the whole time, which, after his return, he himself noticed to his friends, with much sense of mortification at the peevishness which he could not conquer. He recovered, however, to a certain degree, and, in an interval of tolerable health, wrote the last of his novels, *Humphrey Clinker*. It was indeed the last of his publications. His complaints returned upon him with renewed violence, and he

was advised to try again change of air and climate; but as his circumstances could but ill support the expense of the voyage, his friends applied to the ministry to obtain the office of consul at Leghorn or Nice, by way of sinecure, that he might be free from all care but that of his health; but it could not be obtained:—a repulse not greatly to be wondered at, considering the part he had taken in politics. And indeed, what was there in any of his works to deserve from the public any other remuneration than what his bookseller afforded him? He went abroad, however, having probably obtained the desired assistance through the channel of private friendship, but died at Leghorn in the month of October 1771, in the fifty-first year of his age. His wife, who was with him, erected a plain monument to his memory on the spot, for which his friend Dr. Armstrong furnished a Latin inscription, highly complimentary to the deceased, and highly indignant against those who, he imagined, had not sufficiently patronized him. His cousin, James Smollet of Bonhill, erected a very elegant pillar to his memory on the banks of the Leven, the stream he had celebrated, and near which he was born, with an appropriate Latin inscription. It is one of the objects which attract the attention of the tourist in the neighbourhood of Dumbarton.

Dr. Smollet was in person stout and well-proportioned. His looks and manners had dignity, with a great mixture of reserve and haughtiness. He had a high independent spirit, and, it is said, would not stoop to flatter those who might have

served him; but how far this was a matter of principle, and how far of temper, may be made a question. A memoir of this author by Dr. Moore, his friend and countryman, is prefixed to an edition of his Works, from which the facts in this account are chiefly taken. He concludes his character in these words: "He was of an intrepid, independent, imprudent disposition, equally incapable of deceit and adulation, and more disposed to cultivate the acquaintance of those he could serve, than of those who could serve him."

As a novel-writer the characteristics of Smollet are strong masculine humour, a knowledge of the world, particularly of the vicious part of it, and great force in drawing his characters; but of grace and amenity he had no idea. Neither had he any finesse. He does not know how, like Fielding, to insinuate an idea under the mask of a grave irony. He had largely conversed with the world, and travelled, so that his delineations of character and adventures are as different as possible from the effusions of the sentimental theorist. He had certainly vigour of genius, as well as rapidity of execution, but he had none of the finer feelings. To the tender and delicate sensibilities of love he seems to have been a stranger, and he fails whenever he attempts serious and interesting characters. He has little of plot, but deals much in stories of broad mirth, such as that of the man who got at all the secrets of the town by pretending deafness; and his works would afford much pleasant amuse-

ment, if it were not for the coarseness and vicious manners which pervade them all.

His mind, either from the vulgar scenes of his early life, or the society of the crew of a man-of-war, seems to have received an indelible taint of vice and impurity. Vice in his works cannot be said to be seductive ; for an air of misanthropy pervades all his compositions, and he has scarcely in any of them given us one character to love. It has been said of Fielding, that he could not draw a thoroughly virtuous character ; but Smollet could not draw an amiable one. It must be remembered, however, that vice may pollute the mind, and coarseness vitiate the taste, even when presented in the least attractive form ; and it is therefore to the praise of the present generation that this author's novels are much less read now than they were formerly. The least exceptionable of them is *Humphrey Clinker*, which, that a name of so much celebrity might not be entirely passed over, makes a part of this Selection. It was written at a time when the author's mind was mellowed by age ; and cultured society had somewhat softened the coarseness of his painting without destroying his vein of humour. It is the only one of his productions in this line which has not a vicious tendency ; but though the *moral sense* is not offended in it, the same cannot be said of all the other senses. There is very little of plot in *Humphrey Clinker*. It is carried on in letters, and is rather a frame for remarks on Bath, London, &c. than a regular story. There is a great

deal of humour, especially in the first volume : the latter part might be entitled with more propriety *A Tour into Scotland*, and not an unentertaining one, though the nationality of the author is very apparent. The character of Matthew Bramble, Smollet seems to intend for his own. He is represented as a humourist and a misanthrope, with good sense and a feeling heart under his rough husk. His letters are filled with the most caustic strictures upon every thing he sees and hears; the London markets, the rooms and company at Bath and Bristol, the accommodations in travelling; and, in short, every thing he meets with is disgusting till he comes to Scotland--when the scene is changed. He has introduced a whimsical character, Lisamahago, into whose mouth he artfully puts an apology for his countrymen more partial than he would have chosen to take upon himself. The letters of Bramble are amusingly contrasted with those of his niece, who sees every thing with the youthful eyes of admiration, and is pleased and happy every where; by which means the author has in a sprightly manner exhibited both sides of the canvass. The reader is often put in mind of *The Bath Guide*, which has suggested several of his remarks and descriptions, and which may also be traced in the humour of the characters. The letters of Tabitha Bramble are very diverting. Winifred is another Slip-slop; but her bad spelling grows rather tiresome towards the end. It must be observed that the style of the different personages, all ap-

propriate, is admirably kept up during the whole work. *Humphrey Clinker* is the only one of the author's pieces that has no sailor in it. It may perhaps be a greater curiosity for that reason, as the connoisseurs value a Woomerman without a horse.

DR. MOORE.

AMONG modern novels of English growth, few possess greater excellence than *Zeluco*. Its author, JOHN MOORE, M.D., well known to the world by several successful publications, was born at Stirling in the year 1730. He lost his father, a minister of the Scotch church, in his infancy; and his mother, upon that event, removed with him to Glasgow. He was educated for the medical profession, and, after attending the University lectures, was received, at the early age of seventeen, as surgeon's mate in the allied army in Flanders, then commanded by the Duke of Cumberland. He returned to England on the peace which took place the year after, and, after passing some time in London, visited Paris in the course of professional improvement. Here he spent two years in attendance on the lectures and hospitals; and was at the same time patronized by the Duke of Albemarle, the English ambassador, who appointed him surgeon to his household; but being offered a partnership with Mr.

(afterwards Dr.) Gordon, he returned, and, after spending some more time in London, settled at Glasgow. Here he continued to practise for a few years with that gentleman, and afterwards alone, till he was forty, when an incident gave a totally new direction to the rest of his life.— This was his introduction to the Hamilton family, by his attendance on the duke (George), a youth of fifteen, then labouring under a consumptive disorder, for which he was ordered to the continent, where he died. Dr. Moore (for about this time he obtained the diploma of Doctor of physic from Glasgow) was, soon after this event, engaged by the Duchess of Hamilton and Argyle to accompany her son, the late Duke of Hamilton, who was also of a delicate constitution, in an extensive tour on the continent, in which they spent five years. After his return, he removed with his family to London.

Such a tour, in the maturity of life, and with Dr. Moore's genius, added to the early opportunities he had enjoyed of acquaintance with the language and manners of foreign countries, might be supposed to afford ample materials for entertaining and informing the public; and accordingly the fruits of his travels soon appeared in two volumes, entitled *A View of Society and Manners in France, Switzerland, and Germany*. These were published in 1779, and were succeeded by *A View of Society and Manners in Italy*, in two volumes, published 1787. These travels have been very generally read, and contain both information and entertainment. Their author was at once an acute and a good-natured observer of men and man-

ners, and was too much familiarized with foreign countries to exhibit the churlish prejudices which the mere Englishman is apt to display on his first crossing the Channel. In both these tours, entertainment has been one principal object with the author, and the result of his observations on manners and character is often made more lively by being mixed with anecdote, and thrown into the dramatic form of dialogue. From delineations of this kind, the transition was easy to delineating character and manners under the form of a novel; and his *Zeluco*, which appeared in 1789, placed its author in the first rank of writers of that class. Dr. Moore's next publication was occasioned by a visit he made to Paris with Lord Lauderdale during the early scenes of the French revolution. It was entitled *A Journal during a Residence in France, from the Beginning of August to the Middle of December, 1792*; to which is added, *An Account of the most remarkable Events that happened at Paris, from that Time to the Death of the late King of France*. 2 vols. These are written with more discernment and impartiality than most publications of the time, but the crowding events of subsequent periods have thrown them out of date.

Dr. Moore's frequent and successful publications caused his name to be ranked rather among authors than among professional men; and though greatly esteemed by his friends, it does not appear that he was ever in full practice after he removed to London. Amongst his various writings, however, his own profession was not forgotten. He published in 1786 a volume entitled *Medical*

Sketches, in which he has treated his subject rather in a popular than a scientific manner, and not without a mixture, in his usual vein, of anecdotes and humorous sarcasm. He also introduced a dissertation on consumption where one would scarcely have looked for it, in his *View of Manners in Italy*. The favourable manner in which *Zeluco* had been received, induced its author to give to the world two other novels, *Edward*, published in 1796, and *Mordaunt* in 1800: the latter was the offspring of his declining years.

Dr. Moore died in 1803 at Richmond, where he had spent in retirement the last years of his life, delighting himself with the opening prospects of his rising family, five sons and a daughter. He lived long enough to pride himself in the growing reputation and brilliant career of one of these sons; but, happily for himself, not long enough to witness the disappointment of his fondest hopes, in the premature death of this gallant and unfortunate hero. Dr. Moore enjoyed the esteem of a numerous circle of acquaintance, by whom his social and companionable qualities will long be remembered. His person was large, his eye-brows remarkably thick, his countenance was well calculated to add expression to that shrewdness of remark and that peculiar dry humour with which his conversation as well as his writings was plentifully seasoned.

The novel of *Zeluco*, which appears in this selection, is one of the most entertaining we possess, from the real knowledge of the world which it displays, and the humour and spirit of the dialogue. It also excites no small degree of

interest. The scene is laid in Italy, and the familiarity of the author with foreign manners enabled him to diversify his productions with descriptions and characters beyond the range of our own domestic society. This work is formed on the singular plan of presenting a hero of the story, if hero he may be called, who is a finished model of depravity. Zeluco is painted as radically vicious, without the intermixture of any one good quality; but, if the perfectly virtuous character is to be considered, for so we are sometimes told, as out of nature, "a faultless monster whom the world ne'er saw," it is to be hoped a perfectly vicious character is at least as extraordinary a production. There is no degree of atrocity to which human nature may not arrive from time and circumstances; want and misery harden the heart as well as the features: but it is scarcely conceivable that a youth coming into life with every advantage of fortune and person and abilities, should never feel his heart expand, amongst his youthful companions, into some kindly feeling, bearing at least the semblance of benevolence. The whole character has a darker tinge of villainy than is usually found in this country: it is drawn with great strength, and proceeds in a regular progress of depravity, from his squeezing the sparrow to death when a child, to the incident of the deadly grasp which he gives his own child; a circumstance of horror new and truly tragical. It reaches, like the character of Satan, the sublime of guilt. The attachment between the wife and her lover is managed with great delicacy; yet if she preserves

her virtue, it may be said to be *heureusement*: and amiable and excellent as they both are, it may admit of a doubt how far it is favourable to good morals to interest the reader in a passion for a married woman, however unhappily she may be yoked. The character of Signora Sporza is drawn with spirit; it is quite a foreign one. The conversation-pieces abound in humour, and show that intimate knowledge of real life and characters which mere sentimental novels are generally deficient in. The quarrel between the two Scotchmen about the character of their queen Mary is infinitely amusing, and while it touches the national character and national partialities with the hand of a friend, it at the same time exhibits them in a light truly comic. Father Mulo is amusing; and there is a good deal of light humour in the story of Rosolia, or rather in the manner of telling it. Much knowledge of the world and good sense are exhibited in the dialogues between the hot-headed young protestant divine and the colonel, whose wife he insists upon converting: the death-bed of the latter is affecting, and exhibits views of piety, if not vivid, at least calm and rational. It must by no means be forgotten that, to the honour of the author, there is a great deal of forcible reasoning against the slave-trade; and there is no stroke in Sterne of a finer pathos than the answer of the dying Hanno, when he was told that his cruel master would broil in hell to all eternity—"I hope he will not suffer so long." The young may melt into tears at *Julia Mandeville* and *The Man of Feeling*; the romantic will love to shudder at

Udolpho; but those of mature age, who know what human nature is, will take up again and again Dr. Moore's *Zeluco*.

Edward, the author's next publication of the kind, is much inferior to *Zeluco*: the best character in it is that of Barton the epicure, who is indifferent to every thing but a good table, and marries his wife for her skill in preparing a dish of stewed carp. It has also many amusing conversation-pieces. Dr. Moore tells a story well, but it must be allowed he makes the most of it. He has not spared his own profession, but has some lively strictures on the incapacity and *charlatanerie* of pretenders in it. He drew with a free pen; and from his acquaintance with life, and facility in dialogue, it seems probable that he would have succeeded in comedy, if he had turned his thoughts that way. *Mordaunt*, written a little before Dr. Moore's death, is a very languid production; both his novels subsequent to *Zeluco* are not only inferior in entertainment to his first work, but, what was less to be expected, inferior in morality.

MRS. CHARLOTTE SMITH.

AMONG those writers who have distinguished themselves in the polite literature of the present day, the late Mrs. CHARLOTTE SMITH well deserves a place, both from the number and elegance of her publications. She was the eldest daughter of Nicholas Turner, esq. a gentleman of fortune, who possessed estates in Surrey and Sussex; a man, it is said, of an improved mind and brilliant conversation. She lost her mother when very young, and was brought up under the care of an aunt, whose ideas of female education were less favourable to mental accomplishments than those of her father. She received, therefore, rather a fashionable than a literary education, and she was left to gratify her taste for books by desultory reading, and almost by stealth. Her genius, indeed, early showed itself in a propensity to poetry; but she was introduced while very young to the gaieties and dissipation of London, and, becoming a wife before she was sixteen, was plunged into the cares of a married life before her fine genius had received all the advantages it might have gained by a culture more regular and persevering.

Her husband, Mr. Smith, was the younger son of a rich West-Indian merchant, and associated with him in the business. The marriage had been brought about by parents, and did not prove a happy one; it had probably been hastened on her side by the dread of a mother-in-law, as her father was on the point of marrying a second wife. The married pair lived at first in London, in the busy part of the town, but soon after took a house at Southgate. The husband had little application to business; and probably, of the young couple, neither party had much notion of economy. The management of the concern was soon resigned to the father of Mr. Smith, who purchased for them an estate in Hampshire called Lys Farm. Here Mrs. Smith found her tastes for rural scenery and for elegant society gratified; but building and expensive improvements, joined to an increasing family, soon brought them into difficulties, which were not lessened by the death of her husband's grandfather, to whom Mr. Smith acted as executor, in the discharge of which office a litigation arose with the other branches of the family, which plunged them into lawsuits for life. The vexation attending these perplexities, together with the pecuniary embarrassments she was continually involved in, clouded the serenity of Mrs. Smith's mind, and gave to her writings that bitter and querulous tone of complaint which is discernible in so many of them.

Possessed of a fine imagination, an ear and a taste for harmony, an elegant and correct style, the natural bent of Mrs. Smith's genius seems

to have been more to poetry than to any other walk of literature. Her *Sonnets*, which was the first publication she gave to the world, were universally admired. That species of verse, which in this country may be reckoned rather an exotic, had at that time been but little cultivated. For plaintive, tender, and polished sentiment the Sonnet forms a proper vehicle, and Mrs. Smith's success fixed at once her reputation as a poet of no mean class. They were published while her husband was in the King's Bench, where she attended him with laudable assiduity, and exerted herself to further his liberation; her feelings upon which event she thus describes in a letter to a friend: "For more than a month I had shared the restraint of my husband amidst scenes of misery, of vice, and even of terror. Two attempts had, since my last residence among them, been made by the prisoners to procure their liberation by blowing up the walls of the house. Throughout the night appointed for this enterprise I remained dressed, watching at the window. After such scenes and such apprehensions, how deliciously soothing to my wearied spirits was the soft, pure air of the summer's morning, breathing over the dewy grass, as, having slept one night upon the road, we passed over the heaths of Surrey!"

Their difficulties, however, were far from being terminated; and the increasing derangement of Mr. Smith's affairs soon afterwards obliged them to leave England, and they were settled some time in a large gloomy chateau in Normandy, where Mrs. Smith gave birth to her

youngest child. Here also she translated *Manon l'Escaut*, a novel of the Abbé Prevôt, a work of affecting pathos, though exceptionable with regard to its moral tendency.

Returning to England, they occupied for some time an ancient mansion belonging to the Mills' family, at Woodlading, in Sussex, where Mrs. Smith wrote several of her poems.

An entire separation afterwards taking place between her and her husband, she removed with most of her children to a small cottage near Chichester, where she wrote her novel of *Emmeline* in the course of a few months. She afterwards resided in various places, mostly on the coast of Sussex; for she was particularly fond of the neighbourhood of the sea. The frequent changes of scene which, either from necessity or inclination, she experienced, were no doubt favourable to that descriptive talent which forms a striking feature of her genius. Her frequent removals may be traced in her poems and other works. The name of the Arun is consecrated in poetry, and is often mentioned by her :

“ Farewell, Aruna! on whose varied shore
My early vows were paid to Nature's shrine,
And whose lorn stream has heard me since deplore
Too many sorrows.....”

In another sonnet she addresses the South Downs :

“ Ah hills beloved, where once, a happy child,
Your beechen shades, your turf, your flowers among,
I wove your blue-bells into garlands wild,
And woke your echoes with my artless song :

Ah hills beloved ! your turf, your flowers remain,
But can they peace to this sad breast restore;
For one poor moment soothe the sense of pain,
And teach a breaking heart to throb no more?"

Poets are apt to complain, and often take a pleasure in it; yet they should remember that the pleasure of their readers is only derived from the elegance and harmony with which they do it. The reader is a selfish being, and seeks only his own gratification. But for the language of complaint in plain prose, or the exasperations of personal resentment, he has seldom much sympathy. It is certain, however, that the life of this lady was a very chequered one.

Mrs. Smith had a family of twelve children, six only of whom survived her. Her third son lost a limb in the service of his country, and afterwards fell a sacrifice to the yellow fever at Barbadoes, whither he had gone to look after the family property. The severest stroke she met with was the loss of a favourite daughter, who died at Bath, where Mrs. Smith also was for the recovery of her health. The young lady had been married to the Chevalier de Faville, a French emigrant. Her mother is said never entirely to have recovered from this affliction.

Her last removal was to Stoke, a village in Surrey, endeared to her by her having spent there many years of her childhood; and there she died Oct. 28th, 1806, in her 57th year, after a tedious and painful illness. She was a widow at the time of her death, and, being in possession of her own fortune, had a prospect of greater ease in her pecuniary circumstances than she

had for some time enjoyed. Her youngest son, who was advancing in the military career, fell a victim to the pestiferous climate of Surinam before her death, but the news had not reached her.

Though she was worn by illness, the powers of her mind retained their full vigour, and her last volume of poems, entitled *Beachy Head*, was in the press at the time of her decease; an elegant work, which no ways discredits her former performances.

She was the author of several publications for children and young people, which are executed with great taste and elegance, and communicate, in a pleasing way, much knowledge of botany and natural history, of which two studies she was very fond. That entitled *Conversations* is interspersed with beautiful little descriptive poems on natural objects.

Mrs. Smith is most known to readers in general by her novels; yet they seem to have been less the spontaneous offspring of her mind than her poems. She herself represents them as being written to supply money for those emergencies which, from the perplexed state of her affairs, she was often thrown into; but, though not of the first order, they hold a respectable rank among that class of publications. They are written in a style correct and elegant; they show a knowledge of life, and of genteel life; and there is much beauty in the descriptive scenery, which Mrs. Smith was one of the first to introduce. Descriptions, of whatever beauty, are but little attended to in a novel of high interest, particu-

larly if introduced, as they often are, during a period of anxious suspense for the hero or heroine ; but are very properly placed, at judicious intervals, in compositions of which variety rather than deep pathos, and elegance rather than strength, are the characteristics.

The two most finished novels of Mrs. Smith are *Emmeline* and *Celestina*. In the first she is supposed to have drawn her own character, (with what degree of impartiality others must judge,) in that of Mrs. Stafford.

Celestina is not inferior to *Emmeline* in the conduct of the piece, and possesses still more beauties of description. The romantic scenes in the south of France are rich and picturesque. The story of Jesse and her lover is interesting, as well as that of Jacqueline.

The *Old Manor-House* is said to be the most popular of the author's productions. The best drawn character in it is that of a wealthy old lady who keeps all her relations in constant dependence, and will not be persuaded to name her heir. This was written during the war with America ; and the author takes occasion, as also in many other of her publications, to show the strain of her politics.

She also wrote *Desmond*, *The Wanderings of Warwick*, *Montalbert*, and many others, to the number of thirty-eight volumes. They all show a knowledge of life, and facility of execution, without having any very strong features, or particularly aiming to illustrate any moral truth. The situations and the scenery are often

romantic ; the characters and the conversations are from common life.

Her later publications would have been more pleasing, if the author, in the exertions of fancy, could have forgotten herself ; but the asperity of invective and the querulousness of complaint too frequently cloud the happier exertions of her imagination.

Another publication of this lady's ought to have been mentioned, *The Romance of real Life*, a very entertaining work, consisting of a selection of remarkable trials from the *Causes Célèbres*. The title, though a happy and a just one, had the inconvenience of misleading many readers, who really thought it a novel. Their mistake was pardonable ; for few novels present incidents so wonderful as are to be found in these surprising stories, which rest upon the sanction of judicial records.

MISS BURNEY.

SCARCELY any name, if any, stands higher in the list of novel-writers than that of Miss BURNEY, now Mrs. D'ARBLAY, daughter of the ingenious Dr. Burney. She has given to the world three productions of this kind; *Evelina*, in three vols., *Cecilia*, in five vols., and, after a long interval, in which, however honourable her employment might be deemed, she was completely lost to the literary world, *Camilla*, also in five vols. This latter was published by subscription in 1796.

It is necessary to speak of living authors with that temperance of praise which may not offend their delicacy; and though this lady by marriage with a foreigner, and her residence abroad, is in a manner lost to this her native country, the writer of these remarks does not feel herself at liberty to search for anecdotes which might gratify curiosity, or endeavour to detail the events of a life which every admirer of genius will wish prolonged to many succeeding years. One anecdote, however, may be mentioned, which is current, and she believes has never been contradicted. Miss Burney composed her *Evelina*

when she was in the early bloom of youth, about seventeen. She wrote it without the knowledge of any of her friends. With the modesty of a young woman, and the diffidence of a young author, she contrived to throw it into the press anonymously, and, when published, laid the volumes in the way of her friends, whose impartial plaudits soon encouraged her to confess to whom they were obliged for their entertainment. There is perhaps no purer or higher pleasure than the young mind enjoys in the first burst of praise and admiration which attends a successful performance. To be lifted up at once into the favourite of the public; to be sensible that the name, hitherto pronounced only in the circle of family connexions, is become familiar to all that read, through every province of a large kingdom; to feel in the glow of genius and freshness of invention powers to continue that admiration to future years;—to feel all this, and at the same time to be happily ignorant of all the chills and mortifications, the impossibility not to flag in a long work, the ridicule and censure which fasten on vulnerable parts, and the apathy or diffidence which generally seizes an author before his literary race is run;—this is happiness for youth, and youth alone.

Evelina became at once a fashionable novel: there are even those who still prefer it to *Cecilia*, though that preference is probably owing to the partiality inspired by a first performance. *Evelina* is a young lady, amiable and inexperienced, who is continually getting into difficulties from not knowing or not observing the established

etiquettes of society, and from being unluckily connected with a number of vulgar characters, by whom she is involved in a series of adventures both ludicrous and mortifying. Some of these are certainly carried to a very extravagant excess, particularly the tricks played upon the poor Frenchwoman; but the fondness for humour, and low humour, which Miss Burney discovered in this piece, runs through all her subsequent works, and strongly characterizes, sometimes perhaps blemishes, her genius. Lord Orville is a generous and pleasing lover; and the conclusion is so wrought, as to leave upon the mind that glow of happiness which is not found in her subsequent works. The meeting between *Evelina* and her father is pathetic. The agonizing remorse and perturbation of the man who is about to see, for the first time, his child whom he had deserted, and whose mother had fallen a sacrifice to his unkindness; the struggles between the affection which impels him towards her, and the dread he feels of seeing in her the image of his injured wife; are described with many touches of nature and strong effect.—Other characters in the piece are, Mrs. Selwyn, a wit and an oddity; a gay insolent baronet; a group of vulgar cits; a number of young bucks, whose coldness, carelessness, rudeness, and impertinent gallantry, serve as a foil to the delicate attentions of Lord Orville.

Upon the whole, *Evelina* greatly pleased; and the interest the public took in the young writer was rewarded with fresh pleasure by the publication of *Cecilia*, than which it would be difficult

to find a novel with more various and striking beauties. Among these may be reckoned the style, which is so varied, according to the characters introduced, that, without any information from the names, the reader would readily distinguish the witty loquacity of Lady Honoria Pemberton, the unmeaning volubility of Miss Larolles, the jargon of the captain, the affected indifference of Meadows, the stiff pomposity of Delville senior, the flighty heroics of Albany, the innocent simplicity of Miss Belfield, the coarse vulgarity of her mother, the familiar address and low comic of Briggs, and the cool finesse of the artful attorney, with many others,—all expressed in language appropriate to the character, and all pointedly distinguished from the elegant and dignified style of the author herself. The character of the miser Briggs is pushed, perhaps, to a degree of extravagance, though certainly not more so than Moliere's Harpagon ; but it is highly comic, and it is not the common idea of a miser half-starved, sullen and morose ; an originality is given to it by making him jocose, good-humoured, and not averse to enjoyment when he can have it for nothing. All the characters are well discriminated, from the skipping Morrice, to the artful Monckton, and the high-toned feeling of Mrs. Delville. The least natural character is Albany. An idea prevailed at the time, but probably without the least foundation, that Dr. Johnson had supplied the part.

Cecilia herself is an amiable and dignified character. She is brought into situations di-

stressful and humiliating, by the peculiarity of her circumstances, and a flexibility and easiness readily pardoned in a young female. The restriction she is laid under of not marrying any one who will not submit to assume her name is a new circumstance, and forms, very happily, the plot of the piece. Love appears with dignity in Cecilia; with fervour, but strongly combated by pride as well as duty, in young Delville; with all the helplessness of unrestrained affection in Miss Belfield, whose character of simplicity and tenderness much resembles that of Emily in *Sir Charles Grandison*. If resemblances are sought for, it may also be observed that the situation of Cecilia with Mrs. Delville is similar to that of Marivaux's Marianne with the mother of Valville.

Miss Burney possesses equal powers of pathos and of humour. The terrifying voice of the unknown person who forbids the banns has an electrifying effect upon the reader; and the distress of Cecilia seeking her husband about the streets, in agony for his life, till her reason suddenly fails, is almost too much to bear. Indeed we lay down the volumes with rather a melancholy impression upon our minds; there has been so much of distress that the heart feels exhausted, and there are so many deductions from the happiness of the lovers, that the reader is scarcely able to say whether the story ends happily or unhappily. It is true that in human life things are generally so balanced; but in fictitious writings it is more agreeable, if they are not

meant to end tragically, to leave on the mind the rainbow colours of delight in their full glow and beauty.

But the finest part of these volumes is the very moral and instructive story of the *Harrels*. It is the high praise of Miss Burney, that she has not contented herself with fostering the delicacies of sentiment, and painting in vivid colours those passions which nature has made sufficiently strong. She has shown the value of economy, the hard-heartedness of gaiety, the mean rapacity of the fashionable spendthrift. She has exhibited a couple, not naturally bad, with no other inlet to vice, that appears on the face of the story, than the inordinate desire of show and splendour, withholding his hard-earned pittance from the poor labourer, and lavishing it on every expensive trifle. She has shown the wife trifling and helpless, vain, incapable of serious thought or strong feeling; and has beautifully delineated the gradual extinction of an early friendship between two young women whom youth and cheerfulness alone had assimilated, as the two characters diverged in after-life,—a circumstance that frequently happens. She has shown the husband fleecing his guest and his ward by working on the virtuous feelings of a young mind, and has conducted him by natural steps to the awful catastrophe. The last scene at Vauxhall is uncommonly animated; every thing seems to pass before the reader's eyes. The forced gaiety, the starts of remorse, the despair, the bustle and glare of the place, the situation

of the unprotected females in such a scene of horror, are all most forcibly described. We almost hear and feel the report of the pistol.— In the uncommon variety of characters which this novel affords, there are many others deserving of notice; that, for instance, of the high-minded romantic Belfield may give a salutary lesson to many a youth who fancies his part in life *ill cast*, who wastes life in projects, and does nothing because he thinks every thing beneath his ambition and his talents.

Such are the various merits of *Cecilia*, through the whole of which it is evident that the author draws from life, and exhibits not only the passions of human nature, but the manners of the age and the affectation of the day.

The celebrity which Miss Burney had now attained awakened the idea of extending that patronage to her which, in most countries, it has been usual in one way or other to hold out to literary merit; and it was thought, we must presume, the most appropriate reward of her exertions, and the happiest method of fostering her genius, that she was made *dresser* to Her Majesty. She held this post for several years, during which the duties of her situation seem to have engrossed her whole time. Her state of health at length obliged her to resign it, and she was soon after married to M. D'Arblay, a French emigrant.

She now again resumed her pen, and gave to the world her third publication, entitled *Camilla*. This work is somewhat too much protracted,

and is inferior to *Cecilia* as a whole, but it certainly exhibits beauties of as high an order. The character of Sir Hugh is new and striking. There is such an unconscious shrewdness in his remarks, that they have all the effect of the sharpest satire without his intending any malice; while, at the same time, his complaints are so meek, his self-humiliation so touching, his benevolence so genuine and overflowing, that the reader must have a bad heart who does not love while he laughs at him. The incidents of the piece show much invention, particularly that which induces Sir Hugh to adopt Eugenia instead of his favourite. How charmingly is Camilla described! "Every look was a smile, every step was a spring, every thought was a hope, and the early felicity of her mind was without alloy."

Camilla, in the course of the work, falls, like *Cecilia*, into pecuniary difficulties. They are brought on partly by milliners' bills, which unawares and through the persuasion of others she has suffered to run up, but chiefly from being drawn in to assist an extravagant and unprincipled brother. The character of the brother, Lionel, is drawn with great truth and spirit, and presents but too just a picture of the manner in which many deserving females have been sacrificed to the worthless part of the family. The author appears to have viewed with a very discerning eye the manners of those young men who aspire to lead the fashion; and in all three of her novels has bestowed a good deal of her

satire upon the affected apathy, studied negligence, coarse slang, avowed selfishness, or mischievous frolic, by which they often distinguish themselves, and through which they contrive to be vulgar with the advantages of rank, mean with those of fortune, and disagreeable with those of youth.

A very original character in this work is that of *Eugenia*. Her surprise and sorrow when, at the age of fifteen, she first discovers her deformity, and her deep, gentle, dignified sorrow for the irremediable misfortune, it is impossible to peruse without sympathy; and in the incident which follows, when her father, after a discourse the most rational and soothing, brings her to the sight of a beautiful idiot, the scene is one of the most striking and sublimely moral any where to be met with.

As well as great beauties there are great faults in *Camilla*. It is blemished by the propensity which the author has shown in all her novels, betrayed into it by her love of humour, to involve her heroines not only in difficult but in degrading adventures. The mind may recover from distress, but not from disgrace; and the situations *Camilla* is continually placed in with the *Dubsters* and *Mrs. Mittin* are of a nature to degrade. Still more, the overwhelming circumstance of her father's being sent to prison for her debts seems to preclude the possibility of her ever raising her head again. It conveys a striking lesson; and no doubt *Mrs. D'Arblay*, in her large acquaintance with life, must have often

seen the necessity of inculcating, even upon young ladies, the danger of running up bills on credit; but the distress becomes too deep, too humiliating, to admit of a happy conclusion. The mind has been harassed and worn with excess of painful feeling. At the conclusion of *Clarissa*, we are dismissed in calm and not unpleasant sorrow; but on the winding up of *Cecilia* and *Camilla* we are somewhat tantalized with imperfect happiness. It must be added, that the interest is more divided in *Camilla* than in the author's former work, and the adventures of Eugenia become at length too improbable.

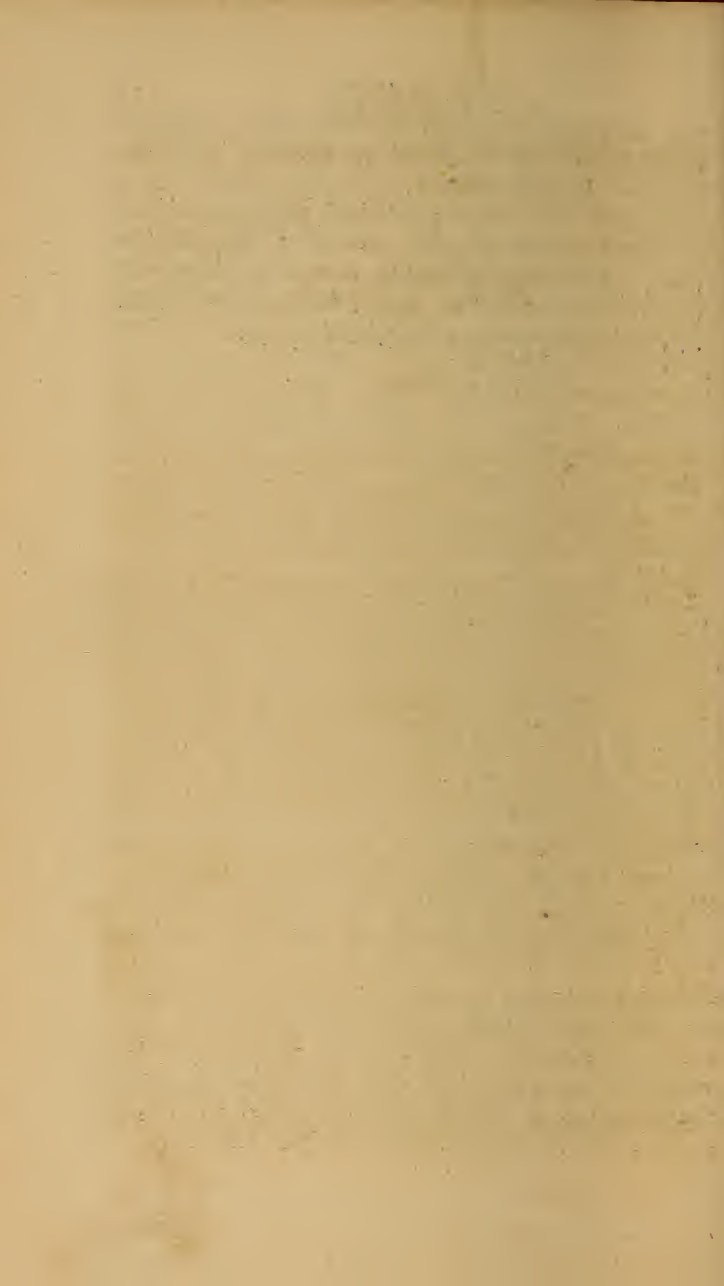
Among the new characters in this piece is Mrs. Arlberry, a woman of fashion, with good sense and taste, but fond of frivolity through *désœuvrement*, and amusing herself with a little court about her of fashionable young men, whom she at the same time entertains and despises.

In short, Mrs. D'Arblay has observed human nature, both in high and low life, with the quick and penetrating eye of genius. Equally happy in seizing the ridiculous, and in entering into the finer feelings, her pictures of manners are just and interesting, and the highest value is given to them by the moral feelings they exercise, and the excellent principles they inculcate.

Mrs. D'Arblay lived some years after her marriage at a sweet retirement in the shade of Norbury park, in a house built under Mr. D'Arblay's direction, which went by the name of Camilla Lodge; but at the time when the greatest part of

the emigrants returned to their native country, she followed her husband to France, in which country she now resides.

A writer who has published three novels of so much merit may be allowed to repose her pen ; yet the English public cannot but regret an expatriation which so much lessens the chance of their being again entertained by her.



MR. BAGE.

ROBERT BAGE, Esq., the author of several novels which have met with a favourable reception from the public, was born in the year 1728 at Derby, where his father worked a paper-mill. Being intended for the same business, he had no other advantages than a common school education; but he was early distinguished for the vigour of his intellectual powers, and his love for knowledge. When arrived at maturity he married, and settled at Elford, a village a few miles from Tamworth in Warwickshire, where he set up a paper-mill, which he conducted to the day of his death.

A man is seldom so closely employed in business as not to have leisure for reading, if he has acquired a love for it. Mr. Bage taught himself the modern languages; and being inclined when about thirty to learn the more abstruse branches of mathematics, he engaged a teacher at Birmingham, where he spent an evening every week for the purpose of instruction.

Living in a retired situation, and always a man of business, though his company was much sought after by those who knew him, it was not

his lot to mix in the fashionable or literary circles, and his works show more of thought than of refinement.—He is said to have first applied to his pen in order to divert his thoughts from a heavy pecuniary loss, which fell upon him in consequence of a partnership in an iron manufactory which he unfortunately engaged in.—He gave to the world *Mount Heneth* ; *Barham Downs* ; *The Fair Syrian* ; *James Wallace* ; *Herm sprong*, or *Man as He Is Not* ; and *Man as He Is*.

Of these, *Herm sprong* is democratical in its tendency. It was published at a time when sentiments of that nature were prevalent with a large class of people, and it was much read. It has some strength of thought ; but it is far from being a regular work, or exhibiting a consistent character. *Man as He Is* has more of story, and more variety of character. Sir George Paradyne, the hero, is a young man of fortune, with noble and generous feelings and of a philosophical turn ; but, being *Man as he is*, he is not able entirely to resist the temptations of fortune and gay company, by which he is drawn for a time into a course of dissipation : from this he is rescued by the representations of his tutor and the influence of honourable love ; his mistress, who is a young lady of the most delicate feelings, refusing him her hand, though much his inferior in fortune, till he is brought to a more sober way of thinking. The character of Lady Paradyne, his mother, a vain, selfish, fine lady, fond of her son, but teasing him with lectures, is drawn with some humour. But the best sustained character is that of Miss Carlill, a quaker,

in which the author has exceedingly well hit off the acuteness and presence of mind, and coolness in argument, by which the society she is supposed to belong to are so much distinguished. In her dialogue with a high-church clergyman, she is made to have as much the better of the argument as the late Mrs. Knowles was said to have had in a debate with Dr. Johnson. It is easy to see how much the author delights himself in the dry humour and poignant retorts by which she is made to support her argument. One of the most affecting incidents in these volumes is the sudden discovery of Mr. Mowbray's insanity. The whole is the work of a man who knows the world, and has reflected upon what he has seen ; of a man whose mind has more strength than elegance ; and whose opinions, often just, sometimes striking, are marked with traits of singularity, and not unfrequently run counter to received notions and established usages.

Mr. Bage died in 1801, at the age of seventy-three. He left behind him a high character for integrity and benevolence. His friends seem to have been much attached to him. They describe his temper as open, mild, and sociable. He is said to have been very kind to his domestics, who lived with him till they were old, and even to his horses, when they were past work. He was happy in his matrimonial connexion, and left two sons : one promising youth died before him.

MISS EDGEWORTH.

THE highly entertaining novel of *Belinda*, and the instructive tale of *Griselda*, are inserted by the obliging permission of their author. That of *Belinda* is here printed from a copy corrected purposely for this Selection, and has undergone considerable alterations. With regard to these productions, the intelligent reader can want no index-hand to point out the wit of Lady Delacour, or the animated dialogue of *Griselda*; and the editor feels it would be superfluous to indulge her feelings in dwelling on the excellencies of an author so fully in possession of the esteem and admiration of the public.

MRS. RADCLIFFE.

THOUGH every production which is good in its kind entitles its author to praise, a greater distinction is due to those which stand at the head of a class ; and such are undoubtedly the novels of Mrs. Radcliffe,—which exhibit a genius of no common stamp. She seems to scorn to move those passions which form the interest of common novels : she alarms the soul with terror ; agitates it with suspense, prolonged and wrought up to the most intense feeling, by mysterious hints and obscure intimations of unseen danger. The scenery of her tales is in “time shook towers,” vast uninhabited castles, winding stair-cases, long echoing aisles ; or, if abroad, lonely heaths, gloomy forests, and abrupt precipices, the haunt of banditti ;—the canvass and the figures of *Salvator Rosa*. Her living characters correspond to the scenery :—their wicked projects are dark, singular, atrocious. They are not of English growth ; their guilt is tinged with a darker hue than that of the bad and profligate characters we see in the world about us ; they seem almost to belong to an unearthly sphere of powerful mischief. But to the terror

produced by the machinations of guilt, and the perception of danger, this writer has had the art to unite another, and possibly a stronger feeling. There is, perhaps, in every breast at all susceptible of the influence of imagination, the germ of a certain superstitious dread of the world unknown, which easily suggests the ideas of commerce with it. Solitude, darkness, low-whispered sounds, obscure glimpses of objects, flitting forms, tend to raise in the mind that thrilling, mysterious terror, which has for its object the "powers unseen and mightier far than we." But these ideas are suggested only; for it is the peculiar management of this author, that, though she gives, as it were, a glimpse of the world of terrible shadows, she yet stops short of any thing really supernatural: for all the strange and alarming circumstances brought forward in the narrative are explained in the winding up of the story by natural causes; but in the mean time the reader has felt their full impression.

The first production of this lady, in which her peculiar genius was strikingly developed, is *The Romance of the Forest*, and in some respects it is perhaps the best. It turns upon the machinations of a profligate villain and his agent against an amiable and unprotected girl, whose birth and fortunes have been involved in obscurity by crime and perfidy. The character of La Motte, the agent, is drawn with spirit. He is represented as weak and timid, gloomy and arbitrary in his family, drawn by extravagance into vice and atrocious actions; capable of remorse, but not capable of withstanding temptation. There is a

scene between him and the more hardened marquis, who is tempting him to commit murder, which has far more nature and truth than the admired scene between King John and Hubert, in which the writer's imagination has led him rather to represent the action to which the king is endeavouring to work his instrument, as it would be seen by a person who had a great horror of its guilt, than in the manner in which he ought to represent it in order to win him to his purpose :

“ ——— If the midnight bell

Did with his iron tongue and brazen mouth

Sound one unto the drowsy ear of night,

If this same were a churchyard where we stand,

And thou possessed with a thousand wrongs,

——— if thou couldst see me without eyes,

Hear me without thine ears, and make reply

Without a tongue,” &c.

What must be the effect of such imagery, but to infuse into the mind of Hubert that horror of the crime with which the spectator views the deed, and which it was the business, indeed, of Shakespear to impress upon the mind of the spectator, but not of King John to impress upon Hubert? In the scene referred to, on the other hand, the marquis, whose aim is to tempt La Motte to the commission of murder, begins by attempting to lower his sense of virtue, by representing it as the effect of prejudices imbibed in early youth; reminds him that in many countries the stiletto is resorted to without scruple; treats as trivial his former deviations from integrity; and, by lulling his conscience and awakening his cupidity, draws him to his purpose.

There are many situations in this novel which strike strongly upon the imagination. Who can read without a shudder, that Adeline in her lonely chamber at the abbey hardly dared to lift her eyes to the glass, lest she should see another face than her own reflected from it? or who does not sympathize with her feelings, when, thinking she has effected her escape with Peter, she hears a strange voice, and finds herself on horseback in a dark night carried away by an unknown ruffian?

The next work which proceeded from Mrs. Radcliffe's pen was *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Similar to the former in the turn of its incidents, and the nature of the feelings it is meant to excite, it abounds still more with instances of mysterious and terrific appearances, but has perhaps less of character, and a more imperfect story. It has been the aim in this work to assemble appearances of the most impressive kind, which continually present the idea of supernatural agency, but which are at length accounted for by natural means. They are not always, however, *well* accounted for; and the mind experiences a sort of disappointment and shame at having felt so much from appearances which had nothing in them beyond "this visible diurnal sphere." The moving of the pall in the funereal chamber is of this nature. The curtain, which no one dares to undraw, interests us strongly; we feel the utmost stings and throbs of curiosity; but we have been affected so repeatedly, the suspense has been so long protracted, and expectation raised so high, that no ex-

planation can satisfy, no imagery of horrors can equal the vague shapings of our imagination.

The story of *Udolpho* is more complicated and perplexed than that of *The Romance of the Forest*; but it turns, like that, on the terrors and dangers of a young lady confined in a castle. The character of her oppressor, Montoni, is less distinctly marked than that of La Motte; and it is a fault in the story, that its unravelling depends but little on the circumstances that have previously engaged our attention. Another castle is introduced; wonders are multiplied upon us; and the interest we had felt in the castle of Udolpho in the Appenines, is suddenly transferred to Chateau le Blanc among the Pyrenees.

The Mysteries of Udolpho is the most popular of this author's performances, and as such has been chosen for this Selection; but perhaps it is exceeded in strength by her next publication, *The Sicilian*. Nothing can be finer than the opening of this story. An Englishman on his travels, walking through a church, sees a dark figure stealing along the aisles. He is informed that he is an assassin. On expressing his astonishment that he should find shelter there, he is told that such adventures are common in Italy. His companion then points to a confessional in an obscure aisle of the church. "There," says he, "in that cell, such a tale of horror was once poured into the ear of a priest as overwhelmed him with astonishment, nor was the secret ever disclosed." This prelude, like the tuning of an instrument by a skilful hand, has the effect of producing at once in the mind a tone of feeling cor-

respondent to the future story. In this, as in the former productions, the curiosity of the reader is kept upon the stretch by mystery and wonder. The author seems perfectly to understand that obscurity, as Burke has asserted, is a strong ingredient in the sublime:—a face shrowded in a cowl; a narrative suddenly suspended; deep guilt half revealed; the untold secrets of a prison-house; the terrific shape, “if shape it might be called, that shape had none distinguishable;”—all these affect the mind more powerfully than any regular or distinct images of danger or of woe.

But this novel has also high merit in the character of Schedoni, which is strikingly drawn, as is his personal appearance. “His figure,” says the author, “was striking, but not so from grace. It was tall, and though extremely thin, his limbs were large and uncouth; and as he stalked along, wrapped in the black garments of his order, there was something terrible in his air, something almost superhuman. His cowl too, as it threw a shade over the livid paleness of his face, increased its severe character, and gave an effect to his large melancholy eye which approached to horror. His physiognomy bore the trace of many passions, which seemed to have fixed the features they no longer animated. His eyes were so piercing that they seemed to penetrate with a single glance into the hearts of men, and to read their most secret thoughts; few persons could support their scrutiny, or even endure to meet them twice.” A striking figure for the painter to transfer to the canvass; perhaps some

picture might originally have suggested it. The scene where this singular character is on the point of murdering his own daughter, as she then appears to be, is truly tragical, and wrought up with great strength and pathos. It is impossible not to be interested in the situation of Ellen, in the convent, when her lamp goes out while she is reading a paper on which her fate depends; and again when, in making her escape, she has just got to the end of the long vaulted passage, and finds the door locked, and herself betrayed. The scenes of the Inquisition are too much protracted, and awaken more curiosity than they fully gratify; perhaps than any story can gratify.

In novels of this kind, where the strong charm of suspense and mystery is employed, we hurry through with suspended breath, and in a kind of agony of expectation; but when we are come to the end of the story, the charm is dissolved, we have no wish to read it again; we do not recur to it as we do to the characters of Western in *Tom Jones*, or the Harrels in *Cecilia*; the interest is painfully strong while we read, and when once we have read it, it is nothing; we are ashamed of our feelings, and do not wish to recall them.

There are beauties in Mrs. Radcliffe's volumes, which would perhaps have more effect if our curiosity were less excited,—for her descriptions are rich and picturesque. Switzerland, the south of France, Venice, the valleys of Piedmont, the bridge, the cataract, and especially the charming bay of Naples, the dances of the peasants, with the vine-dressers and the fishermen,

have employed her pencil. Though love is but of a secondary interest in her story, there is a good deal of tenderness in the parting scenes between Emily and Valancourt in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, when she dismisses him, who is still the object of her tenderness, on account of his irregularities.

It ought not to be forgotten that there are many elegant pieces of poetry interspersed through the volumes of Mrs. Radcliffe; among which are to be distinguished as exquisitely sweet and fanciful, the *Song to a Spirit*, and *The Sea Nymph*, "Down down a hundred fathom deep!" They might be sung by Shakespear's Ariel. The true lovers of poetry are almost apt to regret its being brought in as an accompaniment to narrative, where it is generally neglected; for not one in a hundred, of those who read and can judge of novels, are at all able to appreciate the merits of a copy of verses, and the common reader is always impatient to get on with the story.

The Sicilian is the last of Mrs. Radcliffe's performances. Some have said that, if she wishes to rise in the horrors of her next, she must place her scene in the infernal regions. She would not have many steps to descend thither from the courts of the Inquisition.

Mrs. Radcliffe has also published, jointly with her husband, *Travels in Germany and Holland*.

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